

active. In this language the *bhikkhus*³ of the time preserved for posterity the traditions relating to the life and teachings of the Buddha. The sacred books of Mahayanism are in Sanskrit or in the languages of the respective countries into which it spread.

The *Tipitaka* is a voluminous compilation several times bigger than the Christian Bible. The books which belong to it were not all composed at one time but during a long period. Some texts are of much later date than others. Sometimes in the same text one can distinguish an older core round which later material had accumulated. All the texts, however, now form part of the canonical scriptures. Some portions of the *Tipitaka* are in prose; some in verse; some in a mixture of the two. The *Dhammapada* is entirely in verse.

In the Indian tradition books were not transcribed but committed to memory. It was in this way that for centuries the texts of the Pali Canon were known, transmitted and preserved. We know, however, from the ancient chronicles of Sri Lanka that the *Tipitaka*, brought to the island in the third century B.C. by missionaries sent by Asoka, was written down by Sinhalese *bhikkhus* in the first century B.C.⁴ It has been said in fact that 'the preservation of the Theravada Canon, which had been lost in India itself at a comparatively early date, is the greatest contribution the Sinhalese people had made to the intellectual heritage of mankind'.⁵

The Pali Canon consists of three main divisions called *pitakas*. *Pitaka* means 'basket', and *Tipitaka* 'three-baskets'. The term comes from the practice of storing palm-leaf manuscripts in baskets. The three *pitakas* are the *Vinaya* (texts on monastic discipline), *Sutta* (sermons or teaching), and *Abhidhamma* (further teaching).

The *Vinaya* embodies the *Patimokkha*, a collection of rules—227 of them—which according to tradition were formulated and promulgated by the Buddha to regulate the life and conduct of the monks. The *Vinaya* contains also commentaries on the rules and much legendary matter relating to the establishment and development of the *Sangha*—the monastic order. The *Vinaya* is the 'Rule' of the *bhikkhu*.

The third *pitaka*, the *Abhidhamma*, consists of a number of texts of an ethico-philosophical character. It is of later date than the other two.

The *Sutta* is the longest of the three *pitakas* and the most important for the ordinary Buddhist as well as the *bhikkhu* as it contains, mainly in the form of discourses, the teachings attributed to the Buddha. It is divided into five *nikayas* or groups—*Digha* (long sermons), *Majjhima* (sermons of medium length), *Samyutta* (pro-

³*Bhikkhu*: the Pali term for Buddhist monk. It literally means 'mendicant'. The monk is expected to live on alms.

⁴Cf. *Mahavamsa*, xxxiii: 100-101.

⁵*History of Ceylon* (University of Ceylon), Ceylon University Press, Colombo, 1959, vol. i, part i, pp. 267-68.

nouncements on kindred topics), *Anguttara* (pronouncements classified on a numerical basis), and *Khuddaka*.

This last *nikaya*, the *Khuddaka*, contains, as the very term implies (*Khuddaka* means small or minor), fifteen works of small size. They are mostly in verse. The *Dhammapada* is the second of this group. Although as a collection the *Khuddaka* is of later date than the other four *nikayas*, it contains some of the oldest material of the *Theravada* scriptures. It includes, moreover, all the important works of early Buddhist poetry.

II

The *Dhammapada* is an anthology of 423 stanzas. Many of them have been drawn from other works of the Canon. Some, or similar ones, are found also in non-Buddhist works such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Manusmṛti*. Some are Buddhist adaptations of general moral precepts not specifically belonging to any religious sect. However, in the Buddhist context of the *Dhammapada*, all the verses, whatever their source, reflect the spirit of Buddhism and convey its message. 'There is no reason to doubt', it has been said, 'that most of the verses of the *Dhammapada*, even if they do not reproduce the *ipsissima verba* of Buddha, are true to the spirit of his teaching'.⁶

The compiler seems to have gathered the choicest verses from the various sources, like one gathering flowers. This is hinted at in the *Dhammapada* itself :

'Even as an expert garland-maker would gather a flower, so will the discipline gather the well-proclaimed word of wisdom' (45).⁷

The *Dhammapada* contains in the form of pithy maxims the cream of Buddhist teaching in its various aspects so that in effect it is 'a concise encyclopaedia of the teachings of the Buddha'.⁸ The book is as it were a bouquet of the finest flowers of Buddhist teaching. This largely explains its popularity.

The 423 verses are divided into twenty-six *vaggas* or chapters. The classification is, however, arbitrary and artificial. Sometimes verses are put together in the same *vagga* merely because of a particular word or phrase occurring in them. For instance, in the *Puppha Vagga* (ch. 4) are grouped verses in which the word *puppha* (flower) occurs, no matter what their content. Nor does the sequence of the *vaggas* follow any logical order. There is even a chapter on 'The Miscellaneous' (ch. 21), but it comes in the middle, not at the end, of the book.

⁶Irving Babbitt, *The Dhammapada*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1936. p. x.

⁷The English translation of the verses of the *Dhammapada* quoted in this article has been made by the author.

⁸E. W. Adikaram, *The Dhammapada*, M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., Colombo, 1954, p. v.

The title *Dhammapada* has been variously interpreted. This is because the two words which make up the title, *dhamma* and *pada*, have a variety of connotations. *Dhamma* may mean nature, thing, principle, law, truth, wisdom, doctrine, religion, etc., and *pada* foot, step; path, way; word, sentence; line, stanza; saying, maxim. The two words occur in the *Dhammapada* itself with their meaning varying according to the context." The title has therefore been rendered as 'the path of virtue', 'the way of righteousness', 'words of truth', 'religious sayings', etc. In any case, it is clear from the *Dhammapada* that its purpose is to point out, as it does over and over again, how the wise man (*pandito*, *dhiro*, *medhavi*, *sumedhaso*) should live. In the Buddhist context, the wise man is he who lives in a manner that would enable him to reach the goal of *Nibbana*. The *Dhammapada*, therefore, contains counsel for the Buddhist who wishes to live wisely: it contains words of wisdom.

It is difficult to describe the style of a work of a composite nature such as the *Dhammapada*. However, there are certain general characteristics that might be noted. We have already referred to the terseness and aphoristic character of the verses, in contrast to the long-winding and sometimes tedious and monotonous prose sermons of the *Sutta-pitaka*. Being brief, and expressed in poetical language, the maxims of the *Dhammapada* are such that one could easily commit them to memory and return to them in one's daily life to draw inspiration, guidance and comfort from them.

Another characteristic, which is common also to other works of the Canon as well as Oriental literature in general, is the frequent use of the simile. The simile is a pedagogical device which on the one hand helps to illumine and clarify the teaching because of its association with something familiar. Over 100 of the verses of the *Dhammapada* contain similes. Most of them are drawn from familiar things and experiences of everyday life. To give examples:

'As the bee, without harming the flower, its colour, or its fragrance, flies away taking only the honey, even so should the monk move in the village'¹⁰ (49).

'Just as a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, even so are the wise unruffled by praise or blame' (81).

'As the jasmine creeper sheds its faded flowers, so should you, O monks, cast off lust and hatred' (377).

'The one who does not cling to sensual pleasures, like water on a lotus leaf or a mustard seed on the point of a needle, him do I call a Brahmin'¹¹ (401)

⁹Cf., e.g., verses 5, 82, 167-69, 21, 254-55.

¹⁰Seeking alms but without inconveniencing anyone.

¹¹One excels not by birth but by virtue.

The *Dhammapada* has been translated into many languages. Sanskrit and Chinese translations were made in the early centuries of the Christian era. Translations into modern languages are numerous. The Pali text was first published in Roman characters by V. Fausböll in 1885. A Latin translation by him was published with the second edition of the text which appeared in 1900. Max Müller's English translation was published in the series of *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. Mrs C. W. Rhys Davids re-edited the text and translated it in the *Sacred Books of the Buddhists* series under the title *Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, Pt. I, 1931.

The following is the Pali text of a well-known verse (5), followed by its Latin translation as given by Fausböll, and its English translation.

'Na hi verena verani—sammanti'dha kudacanam

Averena ca sammanti—esa dhammo sanantano'.

'Non enim iracundia iracundiae sedantur hic unquam,
placabilitate vero sedantur; haec lex aeterna (est)'.

'Hatreds are never appeased by hatred in this world, but by kindness. This is the eternal law'.

III

In regard to the contents of the *Dhammapada* we notice that there is variety due to its being an anthology, but at the same time there exists an underlying unity which comes from the fact that all the verses, from whatever source they may have been taken, harmonise with Buddhist teaching.

(1) In some of the verses Buddhist doctrines are enunciated, but very succinctly and without any logical sequence.

In verses 190 to 192 the basic teachings of Buddhism are briefly mentioned, namely, that one must take refuge in the 'Triple Gem' of Buddhism—the Buddha (the teacher), the *Dhamma* (his teaching), and the *Sangha* (the order)¹²—accept the Four Noble Truths, and tread the Noble Eightfold Path.

'If one has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha* and sees with right wisdom the Four Noble Truths—suffering,¹³ the arising of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path¹⁴ that leads to the cessation of suffering: this indeed is safe refuge, this is refuge supreme. Having come to this refuge, one is freed from all suffering'.

¹²Cf. also verses 296-98.

¹³It should be noted that 'suffering' does not adequately render the meaning of *dukkha* which in addition to 'suffering' or 'pain' includes also such ideas as 'imperfection', 'impermanence' and 'emptiness'.

¹⁴The 'path' of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

The Buddhist law of moral causation (*kamma*) is referred to in the very first verse :

‘All states have mind as their forerunner; they are mind-dominated, mind-made. If one with wicked mind speaks or acts, because of that, suffering follows one, as the wheel follows the foot of the waggon-bearer’.

In the second verse we are told :

‘If one with pure mind speaks or acts, because of that, happiness follows one, as the shadow that never quits’.

The three characteristics of conditioned things (*samkhara*), that is, everything in the world, in the existence we know of, are mentioned in verses 277 to 279.

‘Impermanent (*anicca*) are all conditioned things: when one discerns this with wisdom, then one finds no relish in that which is bound up with suffering. This is the path to purity’ (277).

The same is said in the next two verses of the other two characteristics—suffering (*dukkha*) and no-soul (*anatta*) respectively. In the case of the latter, however, we are told that the no-soul doctrine applies not only to conditioned things (*samkhara*) but to all *dhamma*, that is, everything including also the non-conditioned, the Absolute, *Nibbana*.

It is craving, desire (*tanha*) that leads to rebirth and re-existence and therefore suffering.

‘The craving of the man given to careless living grows like a *maluva* creeper. He jumps from life to life like a monkey in the forest looking for fruit’ (334).

This is the first verse of an entire chapter on ‘craving’, the *Tanha Vagga* (ch. 24), in which one is told of the ill effects of craving and therefore of the importance of non-attachment which one should cultivate in order to bring to an end the continuity of existence.

That one should be heedful, vigilant and earnest in striving towards non-attachment is a theme that occurs again and again in several of the verses, especially in chapter 2 (*Appamada Vagga*) which is on ‘heedfulness’. The following three verses are from that chapter.

‘Do not give yourself to heedlessness; do not indulge in sensual pleasures. He who is heedful and meditative attains to great happiness’ (27).

‘Heedful among the heedless, wide awake among the slumbering, the wise man advances, as a swift horse outstrips a weak jade’ (29).

'The monk who delights in heedfulness and looks with fear on heedlessness is incapable of failing. He is indeed near to *Nibbana*' (32).

Nibbana, the Buddhist *summum bonum*, is described as matchless, supreme (23), unmade or causeless (97), the best of states (273), a deathless state (225), a state of non-attachment (273), a state into which those free from defilements, from attachment, pass (126), a state of deliverance (92), that is, from birth and death, from life as we know it and its suffering.

There is mention in verses 246 and 247 of the Five Precepts (*pancasila*) binding on all Buddhists.

'Whoever in this world destroys life, tells lies, takes what is not given, goes to others' wives, and indulges in intoxicating drinks, such a one digs up in this world itself his own root (of happiness)'.

(2) It will be seen from the foregoing that the main doctrines of Buddhism are contained in the *Dhammapada*, though briefly. The greater part of the work, however, consists of moral and ethical maxims. It is by these, much more than by doctrine, that the pious Buddhist is guided in his daily life. It is these, therefore, that the Buddhist values most, and it is for them that the *Dhammapada* is cherished. Examples:

'Here he grieves; hereafter he grieves; in both states the evil-doer grieves' (15).

'Long is the night to him who is awake; long is the league to the weary; long is the cycle of births and deaths to the foolish who do not know the Sublime Truth' (60).

'Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in a mountain cave is to be found that place on earth where abiding one may escape from the effects of one's evil deed' (127).

'Just as rust sprung from iron eats itself away, so do his own deeds lead the transgressor to states of woe' (240).

(3) A large number of the verses contain moral maxims or wise sayings which are aptly expressed and illuminating but have no particular religious significance—although the Buddhist would interpret them from the Buddhist angle—and therefore could be accepted by anyone, whatever one's religion, or even if one has no religion. It is largely because of these that the *Dhammapada* has come to be so well known among non-Buddhists. The following are some examples:

'Like a flower that is beautiful and brightly coloured but has no fragrance, the well-spoken word of the one who does not practise it is fruitless' (51).

'The perfume of virtue far excels the fragrance of sandalwood, tagara, water-lily and jasmine' (55).

'Though one should conquer in battle a million men, he indeed is the greatest victor who has conquered himself' (103).

'Just as a merchant with a small escort and great wealth would avoid a perilous route, or one who loves his life would avoid poison, so should one avoid evil' (123).

'The man of little learning grows old like the ox : his bulk increases, but not his wisdom' (152).

'There never was, there never will be, nor is there today a man who is wholly blamed or wholly praised' (228).

'As an elephant in battle withstands an arrow shot from a bow, so will I endure abuse : many people are indeed wicked' (320).

'Excellent are well-tamed mules; so are the thoroughbred horses of Sindh and Kunjara elephants; but greater far is he who has gained mastery over self' (322).

'Formerly this mind wandered where it willed, as it wished, and at its pleasure. Now I shall wisely control it, as does the mahout the elephant in rut' (326).

We have indicated briefly the main features of the *Dhammapada* and the nature of its contents. A Buddhist layman in Colombo, Dr Cassius A. Pereira, once wrote of it : 'If I were to name any book from the whole Tipitaka as having been of most service to me, I should without hesitation choose the *Dhammapada*'.¹⁵ Many a devout Buddhist would say the same.

¹⁵In the foreword to *The Dhammapada*, translation and notes by Narada Thera, introduction by Dr. E. J. Thomas, London, 1954. Dr Cassius A. Pereira later became a Buddhist monk as Kassapa Thera.

Sociology: Friend or Foe?

by W. S. F. Pickering

Sociology is not a universally beloved human science. It may have gained prestige in some quarters in recent years but it has enemies and opponents, who believe that in the long run sociology does more harm than good. During the past year the Chilean generals removed it with good reason from the universities and have declared null and void all degrees heretofore awarded in the subject. In some of the ways in which it has developed during the past half century, it can