

Dhamma Wisdom

Dhammanīti

edited by Bechert and Braun

translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu



Dhamma Wisdom

Dhammanīti

edited by Bechert and Braun (1974)

translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu (2026)

Bibliography and Abbreviations

Pāli Texts

PNTB: *Pāli Nīti Texts of Burma*, Critical Edition and Study by Heinz Bechert and Heinz Braun (Pali Text Society, London, 1981).
[Dhammanīti, Lokanīti, Mahārahanīti, Rājanīti]

Dhn: *Dhammanīti*, as in PNTB

Gray: *Ancient Proverbs and Maxims, from Burmese Sources, or, The Nīti Literature of Burma*, James Gray (Trubner & Co., London, 1886). [Translations of *Lokanīti*, *Dhammanīti*, *Rājanīti*, *Suttavaḍḍhananīti* (sic.) (=Suta*)]

Ja: *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* (= *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*), V. Fausboll (London, Vols I-VI, 1877-1896)

Dhp: *Dhammapada*, edited and translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, 2017

CST4: *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka 4.0.0.15*

AN: *Aṅguttaranikāya*, CST4

Thag: *Theragāthā*, CST4

Snp: *Suttanipāta*, CST4

Iti: *Itivuttaka*, CST4

Pari: *Parivāra*, CST4

DN: *Dīghanikāya*, CST4

Sbh: *Subodhālaṅkāra*, CST4

Verse Types

rh.q. = rhetorical question

adm. = admonition

stm. = simple statement

sim. = simile

ana. = analogy.

Introduction

The *Dhammanīti* is a collection of wisdom sayings intended to help people in their life and relationships with others by providing clear guidance of how to identify various people and the roles they fulfil. It also shows what our duties are towards them (and they to us), and what sort of behaviour is expected from someone aspiring to live a moral or righteous life.

It was probably used as an educational reference for literate students, and as a source of memorable sayings for explaining moral principles to others, be they lay, monastic, citizens or leaders, perhaps not just by monastic advisors, but also by lay *paṇḍits*.

Although the text necessarily reflects the times in which it was written, it is still relevant today and can be taken as a manual to understanding others, what should be our relationship to them, and as a guide to right living by anyone who wishes to develop their ethical life, and ensure their future, which, of course, depends on their present conduct.

It can also be used as a teaching device to instruct others, be they children, pupils or leaders at various levels of society. It can therefore stand as a handbook for ethics in all walks of life and as a handy reference for right living.

The present text is one of a collection of Nīti (Wisdom) texts that were collected in Myanmar in the late medieval period. It is a part of the Indian *Subhāsita* (Well-Spoken Words) tradition, and seems to be largely based on that tradition, but with significant additions from Pāli Wisdom literature.

4 – Introduction

The Nīti literature in Pāḷi is basically collections of *Subhāsita* (Well-Spoken Words) attributed to wise men, whether named or anonymously. It should be noted that the idea of the *Subhāsita* itself is well known, even in the Tipiṭaka, compare *Sabbhisuttam* SN 1.31, where five Devas first announce gnomic verses, and then the Buddha is asked:

“Kassa nu kho, Bhagavā, subhāsitan-ti?”

“Sabbāsam vo subhāsitaṃ pariyāyena, api ca mama pi suṇātha:

“Who, Fortunate One, has spoken well?”

“All have spoken well and with reason, however, listen to me:

**Sabbhi-r-eva samāsetha, sabbhi kubbetha santhavaṃ,
sataṃ Saddhammam-aññāya, sabbadukkhā pamuccatī ti.”**

**Associate with the wise, be intimate with the wise, by
understanding the True Dhamma of the good, one is freed
from all suffering.”**

This verse could easily have found its way into one of these collections, as also this verse from the *Subhāsitasutta*, Snp 2.14, which is indeed included in this collection at Dhn 64:

**Subhāsitaṃ uttamam-āhu santo;
Dhammaṃ bhaṇe nādhammaṃ, taṃ dutiyaṃ,
piyaṃ bhaṇe nāpiyaṃ taṃ tatiyaṃ,
saccaṃ bhaṇe nālikaṃ taṃ catutthaṃ.**

5 – Introduction

Good people say well-spoken words are first; you should speak Dhamma, not what is not Dhamma, this is second; you should speak pleasantly, not unpleasantly, this is third; you should speak the truth not lies, this is the fourth.

We should note however, that although a *Subhāsita* is known to the Tipiṭaka, it is not yet being used as a technical term, as it became in the Sanskrit tradition, where it constituted a specific genre of materials.¹

Pāli Nīti Literature

The Pāli Nīti literature flourished particularly in Myanmar, but it was also known in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia; and in Sri Lanka, where its Sanskrit works were studied. Perhaps, as the Sanskrit works were already accessible and understood in Sri Lanka, there was no felt need to produce a Pāli Nīti collection in Pāli.

In Myanmar, the language of learning was Pāli, and the same need to instruct people—and especially leaders—in ethics was present. It is perhaps for this reason that the Nīti literature in Pāli originated and prospered in Myanmar.

The best known work of the genre in Pāli seems to have been the 167-verse *Lokanīti*, hundreds of manuscripts of which are known to have been circulating in Myanmar, where its study was part of the basic curriculum, even in colonial times.

¹ Recently a large collection of 551 of these *subhāsitas* from the Tipiṭaka were collected by Ven. Rerukane Candawimala in his *Buddhanītiṅgaha*, which I translated as Buddhist Wisdom Verses (bit.ly/ABT-BWV) in 2011.

6 – Introduction

Apart from the *Lokanīti* there are numerous other collections, such as the *Rājanīti*, the *Mahārahanīti*, the *Kavidappaṇanīti*, the *Nītimañjarī*, the *Sutavaḍḍhananīti*, and many others. Of these the *Dhammanīti* is often considered the earliest and the best of the collections as it contains memorable maxims on a wide range of topics. Although there is no consensus on the matter, Bechert and Braun think it probably dates from the 14th–15th century.²

As a compilation it combines translations of Sanskrit *subhāṣita*, often adapted to the specific Buddhist sensibility and vocabulary of Theravāda Buddhism, along with wisdom verses in the Pāli tradition, mainly drawn from the Tipiṭaka, as well as original compositions in the genre. It therefore constitutes a unique blend of adapted Sanskritic and Buddhist lore.

Types of Verse

As in my previous translation of the *Udānavarga* I have identified the types of verse that are employed, according to whether they are rhetorical questions (rh.q., 26), admonitions (adm., 135) or simple statements (stm., 232).³

These are identified in a hierarchy, that is, if there is a rhetorical question in the verse, it is marked as such, even though they may also contain admonitions or simple statements; again if there is an

² See PNTB, § 21.

³ Unlike the *Udānavarga* there are no declarative verses in this collection, so we have just the three types.

7 – Introduction

admonition it is marked as such, even though it may also contain a simple statement.

We can see from the numbers that the text primarily prefers simple statements, and it prefers to assert truths about the way things are, rather than telling people what to do. However, admonitions are still substantial, so we can say the prescriptive voice is strong, but it is secondary to observation. Rhetorical questions are much rarer, and seem to be used sparingly, and not as a primary mode.

I will now give some examples for these types.

Rhetorical Questions (*Praśna-Alaṅkāra*)

Dhn 335

**Dhammatthakāmamokkhānaṃ pāṇo saṃsiddhikāraṇaṃ,
taṃ nighatā kiṃ na hatāṃ? Rakkhitā kiṃ na rakkhatāṃ?**

Life is the means of accomplishment for Dhamma, prosperity,
love and liberation, one who kills it, how is he not a slayer?
One who protects it, how is he not a protector?

Questions like these engage the listener and makes him think through the answers, and then on to their implications. In this case one who protects life enables the four main aims in life, it therefore beholds one to protect it, as when you kill you don't just end a life, but you put an end to the potentiality of that particular life also.

Rhetorical questions of this kind are a good way of involving the listener with the teachings, and helping them to think things through for

8 – Introduction

themselves, and relating them to a wider context, so they can understand the consequences of their actions.

Admonition (*Vidhi/Nisedha*)

These are normally formed with the imperative voice, or with the optative verb.⁴ Here is an example which employs both (imperative=*adhīyetha*; and optatives=*jāneyya* and *payojaye*), and both positive and negative injunctions:

Dhn 23

**Sabbaṃ sutāṃ adhīyetha – hīnam-ukkaṭṭhamajjhimaṃ –
sabbassa atthaṃ jāneyya, na ca sabbaṃ payojaye.
Hoti tādisako kālo yadi attāvahaṃ sutāṃ.**

One must learn by heart all that is heard – inferior, superior or middling – you should know every matter, but you should not undertake everything. There comes such a time when what was learned is taken up.

Although these are fairly straightforward “must do/not do” type statements, I think that they also require the assessment and consent of the people they are addressed to, and engage the listener/reader in a different, but still very active, way as they agree with or disagree with the advice.

⁴ Note, though, that not all optatives are admonitory.

Simple Statements (*Siddhāntavākya*)

It is notable that in a collection of what are ostensibly advisory verses on conduct that simple statements are substantially more numerous than admonitions. Example:

Dhn 6

**Uṭṭhānā upaṭṭhānā ca sussūsā paricārikā
sakkaccaṃ sippuggahaṇā garuṃ ārādhaye budho.**

Through rising, service, listening, attendance and the respectful acquisition of knowledge the wise one satisfies the teacher.

Although it doesn't say you should conform your behaviour to these norms, that, of course, is heavily implied. I think this again engages the reader who has to draw his own conclusions, not just about the correctness of the statement, but also about how he should apply it in his own life.

Besides these basic forms I also identify analogies and similes, which are marked additionally to the basic form of the verse.

Analogy (*Dr̥ṣṭānta*)

It is interesting that analogies (65) outnumber similes (36), which shows that the text prefers to teach by juxtaposing parallel situations rather than making explicit comparisons. This again suggests a pedagogical style that asks the reader to make the connection themselves, as with the simple statements. The *Dhammanīti* is therefore fundamentally a wisdom collection that *shows* more than it *commands*, and it trusts the

10 – Introduction

reader to see the patterns. The relatively high use of analogy indicates a teaching method based on illustrative examples rather than abstract rules.

Dhn 11

**Sukhaṃ rukkhassa chāyā va, tato ñātimātāpitu,
tato ācariyarañño, tato Jinassa sāsanaṃ.**

Good is the shade of a tree, better than that are relatives,
mother and father, better than that is a royal teacher, better
than that is the teaching of the Victor.

We can all know from our everyday lives that having the shade of a tree, whether from sun or rain, is beneficial. Then, building on that momentum, the verse describes people and things that bring even more benefit.

Analogies may be combined with rhetorical questions, as in the following verse.

Dhn 60

**Hiraññaena migānaṃ va, susīlena aśīlino,
adhammikassa Dhammena, bālānam-pi sutena kiṃ?**

Like animals with gold, the unvirtuous with virtue, the
unrighteous with Dhamma, how about fools with learning?

Just as animals do not have any idea of the value of gold, so the unvirtuous and the unrighteous do not understand the value of virtue and Dhamma, so what can we expect with fools in regard to learning? The engagement is on multiple levels here, as we have to think it

through from analogous situations, and then engage with the question at the end.

Simile (*Upamā*)

A simile is similar to an analogy but is distinguished by using a word of comparison such as *iva*, *yathā* or *upamā*:

Dhn 21

**Mātā satru pitā verī, bālakāle na sikkhito,
na sobhati sabhāmajjhe, haṃsamajjhe bako yathā.**

A mother is an enemy, a father is a foe, (if) during childhood they do not train one, he does not shine in the midst of an assembly, like a heron amongst the geese.

We can understand that just as a heron does not stand out or appear prominent when amongst the stately geese, so an untrained person will be lost in the crowd when in an assembly of his peers. And this is blamed on those who should have trained him better in the first place.

I have discussed such issues as concision, ellipsis, and the collective singulars elsewhere.⁵ Those are general statements which apply equally to this, and indeed all the verse texts in the tradition. They can be studied there, rather than repeated again here.

⁵ See my translation of the Udānavarga (<https://ancient-buddhist-texts.net/tt/Udanavarga/00-Introduction.htm#toc3>).

The Author

As there are a large number of verses having parallels, it seems most people who have studied this genre have presumed that more parallels would be discovered in time, and have not therefore discussed the fact that a large number of verses are only known from this collection, and its derivatives.

Some of greatest scholars of the *Nīti/Subhāṣita* tradition—such as Ludwig Sternbach,⁶ Heinz Bechert, and Heinz Braun⁷—have studied and searched for parallels, and these are listed in Bechert and Braun’s edition of four of these texts.

More recently Ujjwal Kumar, who is a great scholar of this literature, has kindly pointed out a number of extra parallels, which I have included in my text. Although it is not impossible that some more parallels will be identified in the future, it is hardly likely to make much difference to the statistics presented below.

So that still leaves an astonishing 179 verses (over 40%) which have no known parallel prior to the *Dhammanīti* itself. Here is a list of the verses:

1, 2–3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14–15, 17, 19, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 36, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 51, 52, 54, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 83, 85, 89, 95, 96, 99, 107–108, 112, 113, 114, 117, 122, 124, 125, 128, 130, 131, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 144,

⁶ Who himself made the largest collection of such verses: *Mahā-Subhāṣita-Saṃgraha*, containing over 14,000 verses.

⁷ Braun did his MA and PHD on the Pāli Nīti literature.

13 – Introduction

146, 151, 153, 154, 157, 158–159, 164, 165, 166, 170, 171, 172, 175, 179, 180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 189, 198, 199, 210, 219, 223, 224, 225, 228, 229, 231, 234–235, 238, 239, 243, 244, 245, 248, 249, 250, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 268, 272–273, 282, 284, 285, 287, 325, 326, 327, 328, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 336, 337–338, 340, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 353, 357, 359, 365, 367, 369, 372, 376, 378, 379, 380, 382, 383, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392–393, 394, 395, 396, 398, 399, 400, 403–404, 414.

And if we compare the numbers:

Author: 179 verses

Pāḷi Wisdom: 122 verses

Sanskrit Wisdom: 113 verses

We can see that the main contributor to this collection was the author/translator/collector himself.

There is no satisfactory answer as to who the author of this collection was, as he never named himself in the text—and is not noted elsewhere—but it seems to me, that if this is the earliest collection of Nīti texts in Myanmar, as Bechert and Braun believed, then he was a person a considerable talent.

We have already mentioned the versification of a prose passage mentioned above (Dhn 6). We could also mention the following clever verse:

Dhn 9

**Sammā upaparikkhitvā akkharesu padesu ca,
coraghāto sisso siyā, garu coraṭṭakārako.**

Having properly investigated the syllables and words, the pupil should become a slayer of the thief, while the teacher opposes the thief.

Where the “thief” is evidently ignorance, but it is implied in a way that requires the reader/listener to think it through to understand properly who should be slain.

He was also able to handle complex classical metres, like this verse in *Pahāsinī*, which also employs an analogy.

Dhn 349

**Sādhuttaṃ sujanasamāgamā khalānaṃ,
sādhūnaṃ na khalasamāgamā khalattaṃ—
āmodaṃ kusumabhavaṃ dadhāti bhūmi,
bhūgandhaṃ na ca kusumāni dhārayanti.**

For the malicious goodness comes from association with good people, maliciousness comes from association with the malicious, not with the good—the earth holds the fragrance of flowers, but flowers do not carry the scent of the earth.

Previous studies have been dismissive of the anonymous author, but it is clear from the way he was able to adapt Sanskrit—and sometimes Pāḷi—verses, and provide other materials not known in either tradition, that he was more than just a collector-translator, and was one who

actively shaped his material and composed new material to get his point across.

Analysis and Summary

Structure

All manuscript and printed witnesses consulted by Bechert agree in presenting the text with an initial *mātikā* outlining thematic chapters and with headings placed at the beginning of each section, rather than end-titles. This paratextual architecture is shared with other *nīti* works such as the *Lokanīti* and the *Mahārahanīti* and contrasts with canonical and early post-canonical Pāli literature, which typically employs end-titles and lack navigational tables of contents.

Sanskrit *nīti* literature overwhelmingly uses head-structured textual architecture (chapter divisions, *adhyāyas*, *mātikās*, *sūtra* numbering, etc.), so the Pāli *nīti* genre is structurally Sanskritic, even though it is linguistically Pāli.

The original text is divided into 24 chapters, to which I have divided off two more sections, the Proem, containing the Invocation and Table of Contents, and the Colophon, which encourages the copying of the text.

The 24 chapters and two sections vary in length considerably as is shown in this table.

16 – Introduction

[Proem]	3 Verses
1. Ācariyo, The Teacher	10 Verses
2. Sippaṃ, The Arts	14 Verses
3. Paññā, Wisdom	30 Verses
4. Sutaṃ, Learning	6 Verses
5. Kathā, Talk	11 Verses
6. Dhanaṃ, Wealth	6 Verses
7. Deso, A Country	7 Verses
8. Nissayo, Support	8 Verses
9. Mittaṃ, A Friend	16 Verses
10. Dujjano, A Bad Person	29 Verses
11. Sujano, A Good Person	10 Verses
12. Balaṃ, Strength	5 Verses
13. Itthī, A Woman	17 Verses
14. Putto, The Child	7 Verses
15. Dāso, The Slave	2 Verses
16. Gharāvāso, The Householder	14 Verses
17. Kato, Done (by the Wise)	32 Verses
18. Akato, Not Done (by the Wise)	21 Verses
19. Ñātabbo, To Be Known	8 Verses
20. Alaṅkāro, An Ornament	9 Verses
21. Rājadharmo, Kingly Duty	22 Verses
22. Upasevako, The Courtier	36 Verses
23. Dukādimissako, A Mixture of Pairs and So On	11 Verses
24. Pakiṇṇako, Miscellaneous	55 Verses
[Colophon]	25 Verses

Ten of the chapters have verses in single digits; eight are between 10 and 20 verses; and eight are above 20 verses in length.

Largest to Smallest Chapters

24 Pakiṇṇako, Miscellaneous	55
22 Upasevako, The Courtier	36
17 Kato, Done (by the Wise)	32
3 Paññā, Wisdom	30
10 Dujjano, A Bad Person	29
[Colophon] Colophon	25
21 Rājadhammo, Kingly Duty	22
18 Akato, Not Done (by the Wise)	21
13 Itthī, A Woman	17
9 Mittaṃ, A Friend	16
2 Sippaṃ, The Arts	14
16 Gharāvāso, The Householder	14
5 Kathā, Talk	11
23 Dukādimissako, A Mixture of Pairs and So On	11
1 Ācariyo, The Teacher	10
11 Sujano, A Good Person	10
20 Alaṅkāro, An Ornament	9
8 Nissayo, Support	8
19 Ñātabbo, To Be Known	8
7 Deso, A Country	7
14 Putto, The Child	7
4 Sutaṃ, Learning	6
6 Dhanaṃ, Wealth	6
12 Balaṃ, Strength	5
[Proem] Proem	3
15 Dāso, The Slave	2

Note that the whole of chapter 22 is drawn from the *Rājavasati* (the King's Residence) section of *Vidhurapaṇḍitajātaka* (Ja 545, PTS) with a few omissions and summaries.

The Chapters

The text proper begins with the *Ācariya*, or Teacher, but unexpectedly focuses on what the pupil's relationship should be to such a person, rather than on the qualities of a good teacher himself.

The second chapter concerns *Sippa* (Skt. *śilpa*), which has various connotations, including knowledge, craft, art and so on. It also starts with a *mātika*, in this case listing the traditional recognised branches of knowledge. It then primarily focuses on encouraging diligence in the pupil and not being foolish, or wasting one's opportunity, as knowledge is what distinguishes humans from animals, and having a craft enables self-reliance.

The third chapter is entitled *Paññā*, Wisdom, but it really concerns the one who embodies that quality, the wise person, and how he can be recognised, and the qualities he pursues or avoids. Here the wise one, the *Paṇḍita*, is extolled, and this might have been a better title for the chapter. He is also identified as steadfast (*dhīra*), good (*santa*) and intelligent (*budha*).

The fourth chapter deals with Learning, but by showing that the one who remains unlearned is like a barbarian or an animal. The next chapter concerns right and wrong Speech, and how it should be employed, remembering that even a few words well-placed may have more effect than a lot of words used indiscriminately.

19 – Introduction

The fifth chapter on Wealth first shows what constitutes true wealth, i.e. virtuous qualities. But it also shows how important actual material wealth is, as this ensures one's independence, friendship and standing with others.

The following chapter is concerned with living in a good Country, where the virtuous and learned are respected, and where fools and villains are not in charge. If this is not the case, one should abandon the country for a better one.

The chapter on Dependence recognises that we are all in sets of relationships with others, and therefore we must be careful about who we associate with. A common theme throughout this work is that association with the bad will destroy us, and association with the good will raise us up.

This theme is continued in the next three chapters on Friends, Bad and Good People. We must be able to clearly understand these types, and not be fooled in our dealings with others, so that we make progress ethically and secure our futures, which includes in Buddhism, our future lives in *samsāra*. This is followed by a short chapter on the various Strengths that people and animals have.

The chapter on Women (*Itthī*) deserves a special mention because it evidently reflects the thoughts of a patriarchal society, and the suspicions and fears that men have about women. We should keep this in mind when reading, and as I stress in the annotation, we can understand that the text is reflecting its own milieu, and we can read it without necessarily universalising as the text suggests.

20 – Introduction

We should also note that the chapter speaks very well about women in many of the verses, and when virtuous, energetic and diplomatic she is seen as having a true and necessary role in society.

The next three chapters deal with particular roles in life, as a Child, a Slave and a Householder. The child it is emphasised needs to be disciplined, so he will in later life be able to support the elderly; the slave, a chapter with only two verses, discusses typology; whereas the Householder should be careful about the company he keeps, the wealth he has gathered and who he mixes with.

The next three chapters on what should be Done or Not Done by the Wise, and What Should Be Known or understood are fairly self-explanatory from their titles.

The following two chapters deal with how a King and a Courtier should behave in regard to each other and in regard to the populace they rule over. A whole treatise was given over to the behaviour of Kings and leaders (the *Rājanīti*) elsewhere, as it was such an important subject, and these are amongst the longer chapters here.

The last two chapters are really Miscellaneous chapters, giving advice that doesn't fit in well under the other headings, the first of these chapters is organised according to numerical categories: Pairs, triads, etc.

I have separated off a Colophon from this last chapter, as it really deals with the preservation of texts, especially this one, and the benefits and results of passing the Dhamma to our own and future generations.

There are a few miscellaneous verses in this section also, but mainly it is concerned with encouraging the transmission of the Dhamma.

Verse 390 emphasises that: Books and so on are the field, writing is the yoke and plough, having made letters the seed, through this conduct one may become a wise person, i.e. copying this work is first of all beneficial for the scribe.

This Edition

The Text

In 1974 Heinz Bechert and Heinz Braun edited a critical edition of four Nīti texts—*Dhammanīti*, *Lokanīti*, *Mahārahanīti* and *Rājanīti*—from a large collection of manuscripts and printed editions they had managed to assemble over many years, and the work was published by the Pali Text Society (PTS) as *Pāli Nīti Texts of Burma*. This is the text that is the basis of my translation, though I have occasionally made changes to the text, which are noted as they appear.

122 of the verses are found in other, mainly canonical, Pāli texts, including 78 from the *Jātaka* collection, 8 each from the *Dhammapada* and *Aṅguttaranikāya*; six from the *Theragāthā*; 4 each from *Suttanipāta* and *Itivuttaka*, one from the *Parivāra*, and two from the medieval *Subhodhālaṅkāra*. One verse is based on the *Dīghanikāya*.

The Presentation

Many of the verses have to be taken in pairs to make sense of them, these are 2–3, 14–15, 102–103, 173–174, 192–193, 234–235, 272–273,

22 – Introduction

274–275, 276–277, 278–279, 337–338, 392–393, 403–404. This is an evolution from the canonical Pāli texts which were normally written in *pādayugas*.

In this text, outside of the canonical material, the *pādayuga* is not normally enough and, generally speaking, the four-line verse has to be read as a whole for it to make good sense. For this reason I have printed the whole verse first, and then a translation of the verse on a following line, rather than attempting to translate it *pādayuga* by *pādayuga* as I have normally done elsewhere.

The presentation here is organised in this way: first comes the Pāli verse(s), which is followed by the translation. This is then commented on to explicate and draw out the meaning, and explain difficult points.

I regret to say that I do not know Burmese, and so was unable to benefit from the *nissayas* to the text. For this reason I decided to write my own commentary, which expands upon the often elliptic verses, and enabled me to explain the meaning, without additions to the translation, keeping in mind the general reader, who can benefit from the advice.

This gives a structure, which is colour-coded for identification of the main texts and its parallels:

Text

Translation

Commentary

23 – Introduction

The text and translation are also annotated to discuss points of difficulty and of interest, and sometimes to explain my choice of translation.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful indeed to the Pali Text Society who gave permission to reproduce Bechert and Braun’s text here. This has enabled me to work with a well-established and trusted edition of the text and its parallels, which was edited by two of the greatest scholars of this tradition.

This translation was discussed in detail with chat.deepseek.ai, and is all the better for it (accessed from Dec. 2025–Mar. 2026). This often consisted, in the case of difficult verses, of long sessions reviewing the translation over and over again, until we could make satisfactory sense of it.

I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Ujjwal Kumar, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Calcutta, who himself has made many studies of this genre in English and Hindi, as well as texts in Devanāgarī and translations into Hindi of the Nīti texts. He it was who first encouraged me to undertake this translation, and then was kind enough to review the work for me. He also found the parallels to verses 4, 5, 6, 196 and 197.

On difficult points I consulted James Gray’s 1886 translation, which was guided by the *nissaya*. His translation often says much more than the text does, and that sometimes helped me to understand the text better, but I do not always follow his translation.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

March 2026

Dhammanīti

Dhamma Wisdom⁸

[Proem]⁹

(3 Verses)

1 [stm.]

**Vanditvā Ratanam seṭṭham nissāya pubbake garuṃ,
Nītidhammam pavakkhāmi, sabbalokasukhāvahaṃ.**

Having worshipped the excellent Treasures¹⁰ and my teacher,
depending upon the ancients, I will proclaim the Dhamma
Wisdom, which brings happiness to the whole world.

⁸ We could translate the title as Ethical Guidance, or A Guide to Conduct, which is perhaps more literal, but as with my translation of *Buddhanītiśaṅgaha* (Buddhist Wisdom Verses), I prefer wisdom for *nīti* here, as what the text contains is advice based on the wisdom of the elders or the tradition. I take it that *Dhamma* here is equivalent to the third of the aims in life: *Kāma* (sensual pleasure), *Artha* (prosperity) *Dharma* (ethics, conduct) and *Mokṣa* (liberation from *samsāra*).

⁹ This is my title, as the wisdom verses begin only with verse 4.

¹⁰ *Ratanam* is a neuter collective singular here, indicating the Three Treasures.

**Ācariyo ca Sippañ-ca, Paññā Sutañ Kathā Dhanañ,
Deso ca Nissayo Mittañ, Dujjano Sujano Balañ,
Itthī Putto ca Dāso ca, Gharāvāso Katākato,
Ñātabbo ca Alaṅkāro, Rājadhammopasevako,
Dukādimissako ceva, Pakiṇṇako ti mātikā.**

The Teacher, Knowledge, Wisdom, Learning, Speech and Wealth, A Country, Dependence, A Friend, A Bad Person, A Good Person, Strength, A Woman, The Child, The Slave, The Householder, Done (by the Wise) and Not Done (by the Wise), To Be Known, An Ornament, Kingly Duty, The Courtier, A Mixture of Pairs and So On, and Miscellaneous is the table of contents.¹¹

¹¹ A *mātika* means literally a matrix, but what it means in context is a table of contents. These first three verses are written by the collector-translator. The idea of having headings—rather than end-titles—and a table of contents is found in Sanskrit works of this kind, and the Pāli follows suit.

1. Ācariyo

The Teacher

(10 Verses)

4 [rh.q]

**Kin-tehi pādasussūsā yesam natthi garūn' iha?
Ye tappādarajokiṇṇā te va sādḥū vivekino.¹²**

Why listen at the feet of those who have no teacher here? Only those who are covered with the dust of (the teacher's) feet are good and discriminating.

A person without their own lineage of learning and virtue has no true foundation to offer. The truly good and discriminating individuals are identified not by their grand claims, but by a humble, physical mark: they are strewn with the dust of his feet. This indicates their own diligent pursuit: they have traveled far and walked respectfully behind their teacher, collecting the dust kicked up from his heels. Second, it symbolises their humility and devotion. Thus, we should chose our teacher wisely, and then be devoted to his service.

¹² This verse is number 1 in Gray.

5 [rh.q.]

**Vinā garūpadesantaṃ, bālo 'laṅkattum-icchati,
sampāpuṇe na viññūhi, hasabhāvaṃ kathaṃ nu so?**

Without the instruction of a teacher, a fool wishes to adorn himself, when he does not meet with the wise, how does he not attain ridicule?

This verse warns against the folly of intellectual or spiritual arrogance.

A fool, believing himself self-sufficient, tries to adorn himself with knowledge or virtue without submitting to a teacher's instruction. The result is not attainment, but ridicule. The rhetorical question underscores the inevitability of this outcome. In the Buddhist context, where the teacher-student relationship is paramount for transmitting the Dhamma correctly, attempting self-guided adornment is seen as doomed, as true wisdom remains forever out of reach.

**Uṭṭhānā upaṭṭhānā ca sussūsā paricārikā
sakkaccaṃ sippuggahaṇā garuṃ ārādhaye budho.**

Through rising, service, listening, attendance and the respectful acquisition of knowledge the wise one satisfies the teacher.

This verse outlines the concrete duties of a worthy student. The wise one pleases or satisfies the teacher not through grand gestures, but through sustained, humble service. Industry is the effort to learn; service is personal attendance; listening is respectful attention; attendance implies caretaking; and knowledge acquisition is mastering what is taught, here meaning the knowledge of Dhamma. This holistic approach ensures the knowledge is earned and embodied, not just intellectually received.

**Upajjhācariyānañ-ca, mātāpitūnam-eva ca,
sakkaccaṃ yo n' upaṭṭhāti, suto pi tassa tādiso.**

**He who does not attend on his preceptors, teachers, mother
and father respectfully, his learning is just so much.**

This verse delivers a stark judgment on the value of knowledge acquired without virtue. It states that a person who fails to serve their spiritual guides and parents with due care and respect renders their learning essentially worthless. All his accumulated knowledge, scriptures, and intellectual understanding amount to nothing of true worth. In the Buddha's teaching, wisdom is inseparable from ethical conduct and mental discipline.

**Upajjhācariyānañ-ca mātāpitūnam-eva ca
sakkaccaṃ yo upaṭṭhāti, suto pi tassa tādiso.**

**He who does attend on his preceptors, teachers, mother and
father respectfully, his learning is also so much.**

This verse forms the essential counterpart to the previous one, completing the moral equation. It affirms that a person who diligently and respectfully attends to their teachers and parents makes their learning meaningful and substantial. The verse teaches that the heart must be prepared through humility and service to properly hold the water of wisdom. The act of honouring one's sources is not separate from the learning process; it is the very ground in which understanding takes root and grows.

**Sammā upaparikkhitvā akkharesu padesu ca,
coraghāto sisso siyā, garu coraṭṭakārako.**

Having properly investigated the syllables and words, the pupil should become a slayer of the thief (ignorance), while the teacher opposes the thief.

The thief is ignorance or wrong view that steals true understanding. The pupil must kill this thief by first carefully investigating the basic elements, the syllables and words of the teaching. The teacher opposes the thief, and is the expert guide in this battle. The verse underscores a methodical process: start with precise, analytical attention to the teachings under a teacher's guidance, then use that clarified understanding to uproot the inner causes of spiritual theft.

**Paṇḍito sutasampanno, yattha atthī ti ce suto,
mahussāhena taṃ ṭhānaṃ gantabbaṃ va sutesinā.**

A wise person endowed with learning, if he hears: “Where there is (a teacher),” should with great effort go to that place seeking knowledge.

A wise person, even if already learned, must remain a seeker. Upon hearing of a place where a true teacher or profound Dhamma exists, they should undertake the journey, taking great pains and great effort. This combats spiritual complacency. It highlights that wisdom is not a static possession but a continuous journey, and the earnestness of the quest is itself a mark of the truly learned.

**Sukhaṃ rukkhassa chāyā va, tato ñātimātāpitu,
tato ācariyarañño, tato Jinassa sāsanaṃ.**

Good is the shade of a tree, better than that are relatives,
mother and father, better than that is a royal teacher, better
than that is the teaching of the Victor.

The verse presents a graduated analogy of refuge. The shade of a tree provides immediate, physical relief. The support of family provides emotional and social refuge. A royal teacher provides guidance for worldly and spiritual success. But the supreme good and ultimate refuge is the teaching of the Victorious Buddha. It is the only refuge that offers liberation from all suffering, surpassing all worldly comforts and supports.

**Pāsāṇachattaṃ garukaṃ, tato Devān' acikkhaṇaṃ,
tato vuḍḍhānam-ovādo, tato Jinassa sāsanaṃ.**

A stone parasol is weighty, weightier than that is an announcement of the Devas, weightier than that is the advice of the elders, weightier than that is the teaching of the Victor.

This verse uses the powerful metaphor of weight to describe solemn responsibility. A stone parasol is physically heavy. The announcement of Devas carries the heavier weight of cosmic significance. The advice of the wise elders carries the even greater weight of ethical imperative and accumulated wisdom. Heaviest of all is the Teaching of the Victorious Buddha. To receive it is to take on the profound responsibility of understanding, practicing and realising the truth of liberation. It is a weight that demands serious application.

**Tūlaṃ sallahukaṃ loke, tato capalajātiko,
tato vuḍḍhān' anovādo yati Dhamme pamādako.**

A tuft of grass is light in the world, lighter than that is a fickle person, lighter than that is the monastic who is negligent in Dhamma, being without the advice of the elders.

This verse is the antithesis of the previous verse, using lightness to describe insignificance and futility. A tuft of cotton is physically light.

A fickle, frivolous person is lighter still, he lacks substance or steadfastness. Lightest of all is the negligent monastic who is not even advised by the elders because he pays no attention. When a practitioner is careless in Dhamma, even the most profound advice has no weight, no impact, and simply drifts away.

2. Sippaṃ Knowledge (14 Verses)

14–15 [stm.]

**Suti Sammuti Saṅkhyā ca, Yogā Nīti Visēsikā,
gandhabbā gaṇikā ceva, dhanubbedā ca Pūraṇā,
tikicchā itihāsā ca, joti māyā ca chandasā,
hetu mantā ca saddā ca—sippāṭṭhārasakā ime.**

Veda, Smṛti, Saṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika,¹³ music,
computation, archery and Ancient Tales, medicine, history,
astrology, magic, prosody, logic, incantations and phonetics—
these are the eighteen (braches of) knowledge.¹⁴

¹³ *Suti* here = *Śruti*, revealed texts (*Veda*); *Sammuti* = *Smṛti*, the traditional commentaries on those texts; *Saṅkhyā* = dualistic metaphysics; *Yoga* = mental and physical exercises; *Nyāya* = Lit: methodology (includes logic, reasoning, epistemology, etc.); *Vaiśeṣika* = one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, later partially merged with *Nyāya*.

¹⁴ Cf. Mil. 3: *suti sammuti saṅkhyā yogā nīti visēsikā gaṇikā gandhabbā tikicchā cātubbedā purāṇā itihāsā jotisā māyā ketu mantanā yuddhā chandasā muddhā vacanena ekūnavāsati*; which Horner translates as: the revealed tradition, secular lore, the Sankhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems, accountancy, music, medicine, the four Vedas, the Purāṇas, the oral traditions, astronomy, conjuring, logic, spells, fighting, poetry, reckoning on the fingers, in a word, the nineteen (arts). The list of 18 also occurs in *Kavidappaṇanīti*, with some small differences.

**Alasassa kuto sippam̃? Asippassa kuto dhanam̃?
adhanassa kuto mittam̃? Amittassa kuto sukham̃?
Asukhassa kuto puññam̃? Apuññassa kuto Nibbānam̃?**

For the lazy how is there a craft? For the craftless how is there wealth? For the poor how is there a friend? For the friendless how is there happiness? For the unhappy one how is there merit? For the meritless how is there Nibbāna?

Spiritual and worldly prosperity follow a logical sequence of cultivation. Laziness prevents the mastery of a skill or craft. Without a valuable skill, one cannot acquire wealth. Poverty leads to isolation, as friends are attracted to resources and stability. Without friends, there is no social happiness or support. A joyless, isolated life offers little opportunity to perform acts of generosity and kindness that generate merit. Without the foundation of merit the ultimate goal of Nibbāna is impossible to reach.

**Sippasamañ dhanañ natthi, sippañ corā na gaṇhanti,
idha loke sippañ mittañ, paraloke sukhāvahañ.**

There is no wealth the same as a craft, a craft cannot be carried off by thieves, in this world a craft is a friend, and in the next world a craft brings happiness.

This verse extols the supreme value of a true skill or mastery. Unlike material wealth, which can decay be lost or stolen, an internalised art or craft is an imperishable treasure. It is a constant companion and protector in this life, providing livelihood and respect. Furthermore, a skill righteously used supports a virtuous life, generating happiness and favorable conditions not only in the present world but also in future states of existence. It is the ultimate safe investment, benefiting both mundane and spiritual journeys.

Bodha putra sadā: nityaṃ mā khedācariyaṃ garuṃ.

Sadese pūjito rājā, budho sabbattha pūjito.¹⁵

Understand, child, always: do not constantly distress an instructor or teacher. A king is worshipped in his own country, a wise one is worshipped everywhere.

A student must never cause distress to their teacher. This is not merely etiquette but recognition of the teacher's role as the source of priceless knowledge. A king's power and honour are territorial and temporary, limited to his own domain. In contrast, the wisdom of a truly learned person commands respect universally, transcending borders and circumstances. Therefore, honouring the teacher is the foundation for acquiring the kind of wisdom that earns enduring, boundless reverence.

¹⁵ This last *pādayuga* is also found at Dhṅ 34 below.

**Bodha putra kim-ālasse? Abodho bhāravāhako,
bodhako pūjito loke, bodha putra dine dine.**

Understand, child, why be lazy? One unwise bears the burden,
a wise one is worshipped in the world, understand (this), child,
day by day.

This verse combats laziness with reason. The unwise person, lacking knowledge and skill, is condemned to bear life's burdens: physical labor, dependence, and ignorance. The wise person, through their cultivated understanding, lightens these burdens and is honoured by society. The call to understand this day by day is a practice instruction: one should use this reflection as a daily antidote to procrastination, seeing each day as an opportunity to avoid the weight of folly and move toward the ease and respect borne of wisdom.

42 – Knowledge

20 [sim., stm.]

**Rūpayobbannasampannā, visālakulasambhavā,
vidyāhīnā na sobhanti, nigandhā iva Kīmsukā.**

Endowed with youth and beauty, arising in a distinguished family, those without knowledge do not shine, they are like a Flame of the Forest which lacks scent.

External endowments like beauty, youth, and noble birth are highly regarded in the world. However, they are hollow without the inner light of knowledge. The flower of the Flame of the Forest tree has brilliantly colored flowers but it has no fragrance. Similarly, a person adorned with all worldly advantages but devoid of learning and virtue lacks true substance and fails to make a meaningful impression. The beauty that matters is the beauty of a cultivated mind.

43 – Knowledge

21 [sim., stm.]

**Mātā satru pitā verī, bālakāle na sikkhito,
na sobhati sabhāmajjhe, haṃsamajjhe bako yathā.**

A mother is an enemy, a father is a foe, (if) during childhood
they do not train one, he does not shine in the midst of an
assembly, like a heron amongst the geese.

If parents, through neglect or indulgence, fail to properly educate and discipline their child in youth, they are not benefactors, but adversaries. Such an untrained person, lacking discipline and knowledge, will be painfully exposed in any intelligent gathering. The simile of a heron among geese highlights awkwardness and inferiority; the heron stands out for its lack of grace in the community. Proper early training is essential for social and personal competence.

**Guṇe uṭṭhaṅgataṃ yāti, na ucce sayane vase,
pāsādasikhare vāso. Kāko kiṃ Garuḷo siyā.**

**It goes to one who is active in virtue, not to one living in high
beds, or who dwells on the pinnacle of a palace. Can a crow
become a Garuḷa?**

True honour and spiritual progress are not awarded based on external status or luxury. Living in a high bed or a palace pinnacle signifies worldly privilege, not virtue. The respect of the wise and the blessings of the Dhamma flow to the person who is energetically devoted to cultivating virtue, regardless of their social station. A base creature like a crow cannot become a noble bird merely by changing its perch.

Transformation comes from inner development, not outer circumstance.

**Sabbaṃ sutāṃ adhīyetha – hīnam-ukkaṭṭhamajjhimaṃ –
sabbassa atthaṃ jāneyya, na ca sabbaṃ payojaye.
Hoti tādisako kālo yadi attāvahaṃ sutāṃ.**

One must learn by heart all that is heard – inferior, superior or middling – you should know every matter, but you should not undertake everything. There comes such a time when what was learned is taken up.

One should be a receptive vessel, learning everything one hears—good, bad, and mediocre—to understand the full spectrum of ideas and their consequences. This comprehensive knowledge allows for wise discrimination. However, one should not actively practice or endorse everything learned. Instead, one stores this knowledge, and when the appropriate time and situation arise, the right piece of learning can be recalled and applied effectively.

**Na loke sobhate mūlho kevalattapasānsako,
api sampihito kūpe, katavijjo pakāsito.**

A fool who praises himself wholly does not shine in the world,
(but) even when completely covered in a well, an educated
person is manifest.

A fool who is full of self-praise invites ridicule, not respect. His boasting exposes his emptiness. In stark contrast, a genuinely educated person, one with deep knowledge and virtue, cannot remain hidden. His qualities will shine through and be recognised by the wise even if he is in obscurity or facing adversity, like being hidden in a well. True merit is self-revealing and does not depend on self-promotion; it is perceived through one's actions, speech, and understanding.

**Madantadamaṇaṃ satthaṃ khalānaṃ kurute maḍaṃ,
cakkhusaṅkhāraṇaṃ¹⁶ tejaṃ, ulūkānaṃ-iv’ andhakaṇaṃ.¹⁷**

The teaching that tames the passionate makes villains
passionate, just as the light, which is a condition for the eye,
blinds the owls.

Even the most sublime teaching, the Dhamma which tames the wild mind, can have a perverse effect on a corrupt person. Instead of humbling them, it may make them passionate if they use it for debate, status, or to look down on others. Just as sunlight, which enables the eye to see, is like darkness for nocturnal owls. Similarly, the light of truth, which illuminates the virtuous, only confounds and aggravates those whose inner nature is opposed to it. The fault lies not in the teaching, but in the flawed character of the recipient.

¹⁶ This form seems to be only found here in Pāḷi.

¹⁷ *Andhakaṇaṃ* seems to be an abbreviation for *andhakaraṇaṃ*.

Bhojanam methunam niddā gave pose ca vijjati.

Vijjā viseso posassa, tam hīno gosamo bhava.

Food, intercourse, sleep are found in cattle and men. The distinction of a man is knowledge, lacking it, one will become like a cow.

The basic drives for food, sleep, and sex are biological necessities shared by humans and cattle. What elevates a person is knowledge and specifically, the knowledge of Dhamma that leads to understanding, ethics, and liberation. Without actively cultivating this distinctively human capacity for wisdom and virtue, a person lives on the same plane as an animal, driven solely by instinct and appetite. The human potential is wasted.

**Yo sisso sippalobhena, bahum̐ bahum̐ va gaṇḥati,
mūgo va supinaṁ passaṁ na sakkā kathituṁ paraṁ.**

The pupil who, out of greed for the crafts, takes up many, like
a mute seeing a dream will not be able to explain them to
another.

A student who, driven by acquisitiveness rather than depth, tries to master too many skills or teachings simultaneously ends up mastering none. His understanding becomes superficial and fragmented. Like a mute person who sees a vivid dream, he may have an internal experience or a jumble of information, but he lacks the coherent, integrated mastery necessary to articulate it clearly or use it effectively.

3. Paññā Wisdom (30 Verses)

28 [stm.]

**Sussūsā sutavaḍḍhanī, paññāya vaḍḍhanam sutam,
paññāya attham jānāti, ñāto attho sukhāvaho.**

Through listening learning increases, through wisdom learning increases, through wisdom one knows the goal, knowing the goal brings happiness.

This verse describes the virtuous cycle of wisdom. It begins with the foundational act of attentive listening, which increases one's store of learning. This accumulated knowledge, when reflected upon with discernment, deepens into true wisdom. Wisdom, in turn, is the faculty that allows one to correctly understand the ultimate goal of life which is liberation from suffering. Finally, the clear comprehension of this goal itself becomes the source of genuine, unshakable happiness.

**Anāgataṁ bhayaṁ disvā, dūrato parivajjaye,
āgatañ-ca bhayaṁ disvā, abhīto hoti paṇḍito.**

Having seen danger not yet arrived, one avoids it from afar,
having seen danger that has arrived, the wise one is fearless.

This distinguishes between prudence and courage, both marks of wisdom. The first part describes foresight: the wise person perceives potential danger long before it arrives and takes prudent action to avoid it. The second part describes fortitude: when a danger has materialised and is unavoidable, the wise person meets it with fearless clarity, without panic or confusion. True wisdom encompasses both the strategic skill to navigate away from trouble and the inner strength to face difficulties with a steady mind.

**Lobhaṃ kodhaṃ maḍaṃ mānaṃ tandiṃ issaṃ pamattataṃ
soṇḍaṃ niddālukaṃ makkhaṃ maccheraṅ-ca jahe budho.**

The wise person should abandon greed, anger, pride, conceit, sloth, jealousy, heedlessness, addiction, sleepiness, ingratitude and selfishness.

The verse provides a catalog of mental defilements that cloud judgment and lead to suffering. Greed, anger, and pride are kinds of unwholesome action. Sloth and heedlessness are enemies of effort. Jealousy and selfishness poison relationships. Addiction and sleepiness signify a lack of self-mastery, while ingratitude blinds one to kindness. The wise person is not merely someone who knows things, but one who actively engages in the inner work of abandoning these destructive tendencies, clearing the mind for clarity and compassion.

**Saddhā hiri ca ottappaṃ bāhusaccaṃ viriyaṃ sati
paññā ca, sattadhammehi sampanno paṇḍito mato.**

Faith, conscience, concern, great learning, energy,
mindfulness and wisdom, endowed with these seven qualities
one is considered wise.

This offers the positive counterpart to the previous verse, listing the seven essential qualities that constitute a wise person. Faith provides the trust to begin the journey; conscience and concern guard against ethical missteps. Great learning is the accumulated knowledge of the teachings; energy is the effort to apply them. Mindfulness guards over present-moment awareness, and wisdom is the penetrating insight that understands things as they truly are. To be endowed with them means they are cultivated in tandem.

**Diṭṭhe dhamme ca yo attho, yo c’ attho samparāyiko,
atthābhisamayā dhīro paṇḍito ti pavuccati.**

One who is good in this present life, who is good in the life to come, the steadfast one, through comprehension of what is good, is said to be wise.¹⁸

A wise person demonstrates competence in both dimensions of life: the worldly and the spiritual. They manage their affairs skillfully, ensuring well-being and harmony in this present life. Simultaneously, they live in a way that secures their welfare in future lives by acting ethically and on the path to liberation. The steadfast one achieves this through a profound comprehension of what is truly beneficial. Thus, wisdom is practical and concerned with long-term consequences, integrating mundane responsibility with spiritual aspiration.

¹⁸ We could also translate this last line as: through comprehension of what is good, one is said to be steadfast, wise.

**Sabhāvasadisam vākyam, sabhāvasadisam piyam,
sabhāvasadisam kodham, yo jānāti sa paṇḍito.**

That one is known as wise whose speech accords with custom,
whose love accords with custom, whose anger accords with
custom.

Wisdom is expressed through social intelligence and emotional maturity. A wise person's speech is not always blunt truth; it is timely, considerate, and fits the social context. Their affection is not indiscriminate but measured and proper, avoiding unhealthy attachment. Even their anger, when it arises, is proportionate and justified, not a blind outburst. Wisdom here is relational and adaptive, knowing how to embody virtues in a way that is harmonious with custom and that is effective in communication.

**Bhūpālo paṇḍito niccaṃ neva tulyo kudācanaṃ.
Sadese pūjito rājā, budho sabbattha pūjito.¹⁹**

A wise person and a ruler of the land are never equal at any time. A king is worshipped in his own country, a wise one is worshipped everywhere.

A wise ruler is praised for his constant balance and impartiality, his judgment unswayed by mood or circumstance. However, his power and honour are inherently limited to his own realm. In contrast, a person of profound wisdom commands respect that transcends all boundaries, geographical, social and temporal. Their authority is rooted in universal truth, not political power, making them venerated everywhere by those who recognise genuine understanding. The greatest sovereignty is not over land, but over the mind.

¹⁹ This *pādayuga* was also quoted at vs. 18 above.

**Paṇḍitassa pasamsāya daṇḍo bālena diyyate,
paṇḍito paṇḍiteneva vaṇṇito va suvaṇṇito.**

Because of praise of a wise person punishment is given out by a fool, (but) a wise one praised by a wise one is well-praised.

A fool, upon hearing a wise person praised, may feel threatened and respond with criticism or punishment. His judgment is born of ignorance and insecurity. In contrast, when a wise person praises another wise person, that praise is meaningful and well-praised because it is based on true understanding and discernment of merit. The worth of praise, therefore, depends entirely on the wisdom of the one giving it. Appreciation from a fool is worthless; recognition from the wise is a true honour.

**Attanā yadi, ekena vinatena, mahājanā
vinayaṃ yanti sabbe pi, ko taṃ nāseyya paṇḍito?**

If through him, a solitary, modest person, a whole crowd of people become disciplined, what wise person would drive him away?

A truly wise person is often modest and solitary, not seeking a crowd. Yet, through the sheer integrity, discipline and peace they embody, they can inspire an entire community to adopt disciplined and virtuous conduct. Their influence is magnetic and organic. It would be absurd to reject such a profound source of collective good. Real leadership is demonstrated through one living wisely and encouraging wisdom, not through commanding others.

**Sarīrassa guṇānañ-ca dūram-accantam-antaram,
sarīram khaṇaviddhamsi, kappantaṭṭhāyino guṇā.**

Between the body and virtues is an endless distance, the body is destroyed in an instant, (but) virtues remain until the end of the age.

The physical body and inner virtues are worlds apart. The body is fragile, subject to sickness, decay and destruction in a moment. Virtues like generosity, kindness and wisdom, however, are mental qualities that shape one's character and trajectory in this and future lives. These virtues remain until the end of the age because their beneficial influence persists beyond the body's death. One should therefore invest in cultivating what is lasting, not in adorning what is doomed.

**Atthaṃ mahantam-āsajja, vijjaṃ sampattim-eva ca,
vicareyyāmānathaddho—paṇḍito so pavuccati.**

Having come across great wealth, knowledge and prosperity
one should wander without conceit—that one is said to be
wise.

There are three significant attainments: great wealth, knowledge, and prosperity or success. These are the markers of a successful life, things most people strive for and, upon gaining, become proud of them. However, the wise person, even when blessed with these three, does not allow arrogance to take root. He remains humble, understanding that these attainments are impermanent and conditioned by many factors.

Because he is not possessed by pride, that one is said to be wise.

**Nālabham-abhipatthenti, naṭṭham-pi na ca socare,
vipatyañ-ca na muyhanti, ye narā te va paṇḍitā.**

Those people who are truly wise do not wish for what is unattainable, do not grieve for what is lost, they are not bewildered by misfortune.

The wise do not crave for what is impossible to obtain, thus avoiding the torment of futile desire. They do not dwell in excessive grief over what is already lost, understanding the nature of impermanence. When misfortune strikes, they are not bewildered or defeated but meet it with clarity and steadiness. This equanimity is not indifference but an acceptance of reality, allowing them to navigate suffering without being overwhelmed by it.

**Gaṇṭhiṭṭhāne ekapade nātimaññeyya paṇḍitaṃ.
Kim-akko veḷupabbhāre timahādīpabhānudo?**

One should not despise a wise person on account of a single word in an obscure passage. Does not the sun, which gives light to the three great islands, give light to a cleft bamboo?²⁰

One should not dismiss a wise person based on a single perceived mistake or a misunderstood statement on a difficult point. Just as the mighty sun, which illuminates entire continents, also lights up the small, dark interior of a bamboo cleft, so too does the wisdom of a true scholar illuminate both grand truths and minute, obscure details. Partial scrutiny is the method of the petty critic, not the discerning student.

²⁰ It seems the only way to make sense of this obscure verse is to repeat the negative from the first *pādayuga* in the second.

**Guṇadosesu n' ekena atthi koci vivajjito,
sukhumālapadumassa naḷaṃ bhavati kakkhaḷaṃ.**

**In regard to virtues and faults, no one avoids them entirely,
(even) the stalk of the delicate white lotus is rough.**

No person is entirely free from faults or entirely devoid of virtues. To expect perfection is unrealistic and leads to unfair criticism or discouragement. The flower may be exquisitely delicate and pure, but the stalk that supports can still be rough and fibrous. Similarly, even the most virtuous person has minor imperfections, and even a flawed individual possesses some good qualities. Wisdom lies in seeing the whole picture without demanding the impossible.

**Sumahantāni satthāni dhārayantā bahussutā
chettāro saṁsayānan-tu klissanti lobhamohitā.**

*A very great many teachings borne by the learned cut through
doubts, but the greedy and deluded are (still) afflicted.*

A scholar may carry a vast repertoire of teachings, and those teachings themselves have the power to cut through doubt and confusion. However, if the learner is motivated by greed and blinded by delusion, they cannot apply the teachings correctly. Instead of being liberated by the Dhamma, they become afflicted and twist the teachings to suit their biases, creating inner conflict, and increasing their own suffering. The medicine is useless if the patient is unwilling to follow the treatment.

**Dosaṃ pi sagoṇe disvā, guṇavādī vadanti na.
Na loko vijjamānam-pi cande passati lañchanam.**

Having seen a fault in a virtuous person, the ones who speak of virtue do not mention it. The world takes no note of the mark on the moon, even though it exists.

When observing a person who is fundamentally virtuous, a wise and kind person will not publicly highlight their minor faults. This is not deceit but an understanding of proportion and the power of encouragement. Everyone can see the bright, illuminating sphere of the moon, and though a mark exists on its surface, it does not define it. To focus on the mark is to miss the light. Wisdom consists of knowing when to overlook minor flaws in favor of appreciating and supporting the greater good in a person.

**Sakiṃ pi viññū dhīrena karoti saha saṅgamaṃ,
attatthañ-ca paratthañ-ca, Nibbānan-taṃ sukhaṃ labhe.**

Even once making association together with a steadfast and wise one one may gain one's own and another's welfare, and the happiness of Nibbāna.

Even a single encounter or brief association with two types of noble individuals, the steadfast practitioner and the deeply wise one, can be profoundly transformative. Such contact can lead to benefit for oneself through inspiration and instruction, benefit for others as one then shares the Dhamma, and can even plant the seeds for attaining the ultimate happiness of Nibbāna. This underscores that the path is not walked in isolation; association with the good is a powerful catalyst for progress on all levels.

**Nadītīre ṭhite kūpe, araṇītālavaṇṭake,
na vad' āpādi natthī ti, na mukhe vacanaṁ tathā.**

Do not say there is nothing in a well standing on a river bank,
there is nothing in a palmyra stalk used as a kindling stick,
(also) that there is no word in the mouth (of the wise).

Just because one cannot immediately see water in a well from the bank of a river, does not mean the well is dry. Just because one doesn't see fire in a palm stalk used as a fire-drill, doesn't mean the potential for fire isn't there. Similarly, just because a wise person is silent does not mean they have nothing to say. Wisdom, water and fire may be hidden, latent, or awaiting the right conditions to manifest. The wise understand potential and do not confuse absence of evidence with evidence of absence.

**Paṇḍito apuṭṭho bherī, pajjunno hoti pucchito,
bālo puṭṭho apuṭṭho pi, bahuṃ vikatthate sadā.**

Unasked a wise one is (like)²¹ a kettledrum (unstruck); when questioned he is (like) a rain cloud; (but) a fool, asked and unasked, always boasts a lot.

A wise person, like an unstruck drum, is quiet and unassuming when not called upon, not imposing his views. But when respectfully questioned, they respond like a rain cloud, pouring forth nourishing and beneficial knowledge. A fool, however, is constantly boastful and voluble whether anyone asks or not, filling the air with empty noise. Wisdom is marked by restraint, relevance and generosity in sharing when it is truly helpful.

Folly is marked by incessant self-promotion with little substance.

²¹ We have to provide a word indicating a simile for the meaning to work.

**Guṇasampannālaṅkāro, sabbasattahitāvaho,
parattatthaṃ na careyya kuto so paṇḍito bhava?**

The one endowed with the ornament of virtue, who brings benefit to all beings, how could that wise one not act for the welfare to others?

Someone who is truly endowed with virtue and compassion inherently brings benefit to all beings they encounter. Given this nature, how could such a person possibly *not* act for the benefit of others? It is a logical impossibility. True wisdom and virtue overflow; they are not self-contained. Altruism is not optional for the wise but the inevitable expression of their inner qualities. A wise one who is indifferent to others is a contradiction in terms.

**Saparatthaṃ care dhīro, asakkonto sakaṃ care,
tam-pi ceva asakkonto, pāpāttānaṃ viyojaye.**

The steadfast one should act for another's welfare, (if) unable,
he should act for his own welfare, if unable, he should (at
least) keep himself from wrong.

The highest ideal is to act for the welfare of others. If one lacks the capacity or opportunity for that, the next best course is to work diligently on one's own spiritual development and welfare. If even that proves too difficult in a moment of weakness, the minimum and essential duty is to refrain from doing evil, to keep himself from wrong. This is a compassionate and realistic ethic: when you cannot do great good, do good; when you cannot do good, at the very least, do no harm. Every level is a form of wise restraint.

**Sabbaṃ suṇāti sotena, sabbaṃ passati cakkhunā,
na ca diṭṭhaṃ sutam dhīro sabbaṃ ujjitum-ar^ahati.**

One hears everything with the ear, one sees everything with
the eye, the steadfast ought not to discard all that is seen and
heard.

He hears everything with the ear means: he hears with the ear all
sounds that come within range, the well-spoken and the ill-spoken
because he is not deaf. Similarly, he sees every form, beautiful and ugly,
with the eye because he is not blind. This is the natural function of the
faculties. However, the steadfast ought not to discard all that is seen and
heard because not everything that is seen or heard should be either
rejected or taken up by a wise, discerning person.²²

²² Abbreviated from the *Theragāthaṭṭhakathā*.

**Cakkhumā 'ssa yathā andho, sotavā badhiro yathā,
paññavā 'ssa yathā mugo, balavā dubbalo-r-iva;
atha atthe samuppanne, sayetha matasāyikaṃ.**

Having eyes, be like one blind, having ears, like one deaf,
having wisdom, be like one dumb, having strength, like the
weak; then with the arising of an issue, lie down like one dead.

Therefore, a person having eyes, with regard to what should be rejected, should be like a blind man. Regarding what should be rejected when heard, even one with good ears should be like a deaf man. A wise person, with regard to what should not be spoken, should be like one dumb. A strong person endowed with power, regarding what should not be done, should be like a weakling. When an issue that must not be done by oneself arises and presents itself, one should act like one dead.²³

²³ Abbreviated from the *Theragāthaṭṭhakathā*.

**Atijātaṃ anujātaṃ puttam-icchanti paṇḍitā,
avajātaṃ na icchanti, yo hoti kulachinnako.**

The wise wish for a child who is better or (at least) equal, they do not wish for one inferior, one who breaks up the family.

Wise parents do not simply wish for just any child; they desire a child who is either equal to them in virtue and accomplishment, or, ideally, superior who will elevate the family's standing, especially in the Dhamma. They fear a child who is inferior, one whose bad conduct brings shame, dissipates wealth, or abandons tradition, thus breaking up the family in both a social and moral sense. Such a child severs the lineage not just physically but morally, destroying its reputation and spiritual potential.

**Tayo va paṇḍitā satthe, aham-evā ti vādi ca,
aham-api ti vādī ca, nāhan-ti ca ime tayo,**

In the texts, there are three who are knowledgeable, one says: “I only (am wise),” and one says: “I also (am wise),” and one “I am not (wise)” – these three.

The first teacher, who declares “I only am wise,” is full of conceit, elevating himself. He attaches to wisdom as a personal attribute, a source of pride and proclaims a self-view. The second, stating “I also am wise,” reveals a comparative mind; his claim is relational, born from seeing another’s claim and wishing to assert equality or superiority. The third, who says “I am not wise,” represents the highest understanding. These are the three types of knowledgeable people known to the texts.

**Na sã sabhã yattha na santi santo,
na te santo ye na vadanti Dhammañ;
rãgañ-ca dosañ-ca pahãya mohañ,
Dhammañ bhañantã va bhavanti santo.**

That is no assembly where there are no good people, those are not good people who do not speak the Dhamma; having abandoned passion, hatred and delusion, they become good people proclaiming the Dhamma.

A gathering without virtuous, truthful individuals is merely a crowd, not a good assembly. Conversely, people who do not speak and teach the Dhamma – the truth that leads to the end of suffering – cannot be considered truly good, regardless of their social standing. True goodness is found in those who have abandoned the root poisons of passion, hatred and delusion, and who consequently proclaim the Dhamma. Their speech and presence transform a mere gathering into a meaningful gathering.

**Bāle c’ ummattake bhūpe gurumātāpitūsvapi,
Saṅhe jeṭṭhe ca bhātari na dosā kariyā budho.**

A wise man should not have aversion towards a fool,²⁴ a madman, a king, a teacher, a mother, a father, a Saṅgha or an elder brother.

One should not harbor aversion towards fools, the insane, or those in positions of authority like kings and teachers—even when they act unjustly. The same forbearance extends to family and the spiritual community. This is not approval of wrong action, but an inner discipline to maintain one’s own peace and wisdom without reacting with anger or contempt, recognising that aversion harms the one who holds it first and foremost.

²⁴ Gray: A wise man should not look for faults in a child, a madman, etc. This is possibly based on the nissaya, but why a wise man would not point out faults to a child and some of the others is not clear to me.

**Atthanāsaṃ manotāpaṃ ghare duccharitāni ca
vañcanañ-ca avamānaṃ matimā na pakāsaye.**

A thoughtful person should not reveal his loss of wealth,
mental anguish, bad conduct in the home, deceit or disrespect.

A thoughtful person does not publicly broadcast private family troubles, domestic misdeeds, deceptions they have encountered or insults they have suffered. To do so is to spread shame, conflict and negativity without purpose. It often stems from a desire for sympathy or vengeance, which only perpetuates discord. Wisdom understands the value of privacy, the importance of resolving issues within appropriate bounds, and the fruitlessness of airing grievances. Some matters are to be addressed quietly, not made into public spectacle.

**Paradāraṃ janettīvā, leḍḍuvā parasantakaṃ,
attavā sabbasattānaṃ yo passati sa paṇḍito.**

That one is wise who regards another's wife as his mother,
another's property like a clod of earth, all beings as himself.

To see another's wife as one's own mother destroys lust and protects social harmony. To see another's property as a worthless clod of earth eradicates greed and theft. To see all beings as oneself, sharing the same desire for happiness and fear of suffering, cultivates universal compassion and destroys hatred. These are not mere rules, but trainings in perception that uproot the three poisons at their source. The one who internalises these views lives in natural accord with the Dhamma.

**Saṭṭhena mittam, kalusena Dhammam,
paropatāpena samiddhibhāvam,
sukhena vijjam, pharusena nārim,
icchanti ye ceva na paṇḍitā te.**

They are not wise who wish for friendship through deceit, the Dhamma through impurity, prosperity through distressing others, knowledge through pleasure, a woman through harshness.

Seeking friendship through deceit yields only suspicion. Pursuing the pure Dhamma with an impure mind is impossible. Wanting prosperity by causing distress to others is a negative action. Expecting profound knowledge to come through mere pleasure avoids the necessary effort. Trying to win a woman through harshness breeds fear, not love. In each case, the desired noble end is sabotaged by an ignoble, unskillful means. True wisdom understands that wholesome goals can only be achieved through wholesome methods.

4. Sutaṃ Learning (6 Verses)

58 [ana, adm.]

**Nipuṇe sutam-eseyya vicinitvā sutatthiko;
bhattaṃ h' ukkhaliyaṃ pakkam, bhājane pi tathā bhava.**

One seeking learning, having investigated, should seek out
learning in a skilful one; for rice that may have been cooked
in a pot, is also cooked when it is in a dish.

A sincere seeker must carefully investigate and then seek out learning from someone who is truly accomplished, refined and skilled. The analogy is direct: rice cooked thoroughly in a pot remains perfectly cooked even when transferred to a serving dish. Similarly, knowledge thoroughly mastered by a true expert remains intact and potent when imparted to a student. The teaching does not degrade through transmission from a genuine source.

**Vasum gaṇhanti dūraṭṭhā pabbate ratanocite,
na milakkhā samīpaṭṭhā; evaṃ bālā bahussute.**

Those who live far off seize wealth on a mountain of jewels,
(but) not the barbarian, who lives near; similarly are fools
with the learned.

A person from a distant land will travel to a jewel-filled mountain and actively gather its treasures. A local barbarian living right next to it, however, fails to recognise its value and remains poor. The analogy applies to spiritual knowledge: fools who live in close company with the learned, perhaps even in the same monastery or community, remain untouched by that wisdom. They do not perceive its worth, make no effort to gather it, and thus gain no benefit from their fortunate proximity, whereas others may travel a long distance to gather his pearls of wisdom.

**Hiraññaena migānaṃ va, susīlena asīlino,
adhammikassa Dhammena, bālānaṃ-pi sutena kiṃ?**

*Like animals with gold, the unvirtuous with virtue, the
unrighteous with Dhamma, how about fools with learning?*

Gold is useless to animals; they cannot eat it or understand its value. A code of virtue is meaningless to someone without a moral compass; they cannot apply it. The Dhamma, the law of truth, is irrelevant to one who is fundamentally unrighteous. The rhetorical question is: what use, therefore, is learning to a fool? He may memorise texts, but without the foundational qualities of intelligence, ethics and right intention, that learning is as useless as gold to a cow.

**Appassutāyaṃ puriso balibaddho va jīvati,²⁵
maṃsāni tassa vaḍḍhanti, paññā tassa na vaḍḍhati.**

The person of little learning lives like an ox, for although his
flesh does increase, his wisdom does not increase.

A person who does not pursue learning may grow older, but they mature only physically, like an ox fattened for slaughter. Their body ages and expands, but their inner faculty of wisdom remains stunted and undeveloped. Such a life is one of wasted potential, driven by base instincts and appetites rather than conscious growth. The increase in flesh is ultimately perishable and leads to decay, while the increase in wisdom leads to liberation. Merely surviving through the years is not the same as living a meaningful life.

²⁵ Dhp 152 reads *jīrati*, ages.

**Appassuto sutam appam bahu maññati mānavo,
sindhūdakam apassanto, kūpe toyam va maṇḍuko.**

The student of little learning thinks his little learning great,
like a frog in a well thinks his water great, having not seen the
waters of the ocean.

A person with only a little learning, having never encountered the vast depth of true scholarship, easily misjudges their own understanding as substantial. They are like a frog born and raised in a well, who believes the small pool of water it inhabits is the entire ocean. Lacking any perspective of the immense, boundless ocean of knowledge that exists, the frog and the half-educated person is content in their complacency.

True wisdom begins with the recognition of how much one does not know, the humility that comes from glimpsing the vastness of the ocean.

**Tad-aminā pi jānātha: sobbhesu padaresu ca,
saṇantā yanti kusumbhā, tuṇhī yanti mahodadhī.**

**Know this also from these: small streams in hollows and
crevices flow noisily, (but) great rivers²⁶ flow quietly.**

Small streams rushing through rocky hollows make a great deal of noise with their restricted flow. In contrast, the great, deep rivers as a whole flow quietly. Similarly, those with a little knowledge or minor attainments are often boastful, argumentative and loud in proclaiming their views. Those with profound wisdom and real attainment are characterised by quiet confidence, calm and depth. They have no need for self-promotion; their presence and actions speak volumes, but quietly.

²⁶ *Mahodadhi* can mean rivers or the ocean, but here the Snp. comm. defines it as meaning: great rivers.

5. Kathā Speech (11 Verses)

64 [adm.]

**Subhāsitaṃ uttamam-āhu santo;
Dhammaṃ bhaṇe nādhammaṃ, taṃ dutiyaṃ,²⁷
piyaṃ bhaṇe nāpiyaṃ taṃ tatiyaṃ,
saccaṃ bhaṇe nālikaṃ taṃ catutthaṃ.**

Good people say well-spoken words are first; you should speak
Dhamma, not what is not Dhamma, this is second; you should
speak pleasantly, not unpleasantly, this is third; you should
speak the truth not lies, this is the fourth.

The first and foundational principle is to speak well-spoken words, which have good sense and meaning. Second, you should speak in accordance with Dhamma, the truth that leads to welfare and liberation. Third, speech should be pleasant and kind, fostering harmony rather than discord. Fourthly, it must be truthful, abstaining from lies and deception. It is not enough for good words to be factually correct; they must also be motivated by goodwill and aimed at the listener's good, making truth both ethically sound and skillfully delivered.

²⁷ We need to read *dutīyam*, and in the next line *tatīyam*, for the metre.

**Sīhamedā suvaṇṇe va na ca tiṭṭhanti rajate,
paṇḍitānaṃ kathā vākyaṃ na ca tiṭṭhati dujjane.**

The fat of lions remains in gold, but not in silver (dishes),²⁸
(similarly), the speech and conversation of the wise does not
remain in a bad person.²⁹

Just as the rich fat of a lion is thought not to remain in a metal like silver but only in precious gold, the profound speech of the wise does not stick or find a lasting place in a person of bad character. A foolish or malicious listener lacks the mental substance to receive, retain, or properly apply wise counsel. The teaching is lost on them, as their nature cannot provide the right conditions for it to take root. True understanding requires a receptive and virtuous mind, a vessel as precious as gold.

²⁸ This must be a proverbial saying.

²⁹ The opening of the second *pādayuga* may have read better: *paṇḍitānaṃ tathā vākyaṃ, tathā* giving the meaning *similarly*, without duplicating the words for speech and conversation.

**Mahātejo pi tejo yaṁ mattikaṁ na muduṁ kare,
āpo pāpeti mudukaṁ – sādhuvacā ca kakkhaḷaṁ.**

Even the heat of great heat cannot make mud soft, (but) water achieves it – and good speech softens one who is harsh.

Intense heat, for all its fury, cannot soften hard, dry mud; it may only bake it harder. Water, however, through persistent softness, permeates and softens it completely. Similarly, harsh words or anger cannot soften a person's stubborn or cruel heart; they only provoke further rigidity. But calm, kind and virtuous speech has the penetrating, transformative power to dissolve hostility and soften harsh dispositions. The most effective change comes from truthful engagement.

**Mudunā va ripuṃ jeti, mudunā jeti dāruṇaṃ,
nāsiddhaṃ mudunā kiñci, yato 'to mudunā jaye.**

Gentleness surely conquers an adversary, gentleness conquers the cruel, there is nothing gentleness cannot accomplish, wherefore from this you should conquer with gentleness.

Gentleness is the supreme method for overcoming even the most difficult challenges: it can pacify an enemy and subdue cruel individuals. The declaration that there is nothing gentleness cannot accomplish attributes to it a universal efficacy. Because gentleness is so effective, one should adopt it as the primary means of victory. Here, victory is not over others but over conflict itself, achieving resolution and harmony without creating new animosity. Gentleness is therefore presented as the ultimate strength.

**Candanam sītaḷam loke, tato candam va sītaḷam,
candanacandasītamhā sādhuṽākyaḃ subhāsitaḃ.**

Sandalwood is cool in the world, the moon is cooler than that,
(but) cooler than sandalwood and the moon is good speech and
well-spoken words.

Sandalwood paste is renowned in the world for its cooling, soothing effect on the body. The moonlight is even cooler, offering relief from the day's heat and a calming presence. However, better than both is well-spoken, kind and truthful speech. While sandalwood and the moon soothe physical discomfort, good speech has the power to cool the fires of the mind such as anger, anxiety, sorrow and passion. It provides a deeper, spiritual relief that surpasses any sensory comfort, healing the heart directly.

**Sītavāco bahumitto, pharuso tu amittako,
upamā ettha ñātabbā, candasūriyarājunam̐.**

One of cool speech has many friends, one of harsh speech is
friendless, here you should understand the simile of the moon,
the sun and kings.³⁰

A person who speaks with a cool, calm and gentle tone naturally attracts many friends, as their words are reassuring and foster connection. In contrast, a person of harsh, abrasive speech repels others and ends up friendless. The simile invites reflection: the cool, gentle moon is beloved and gazed upon, while the harsh, burning sun is revered but kept at a distance, and kings must take note of this. Speech determines whether one is approached with affection or avoided.

³⁰ This seems to refer to vs. 382, which has the same concluding line: The sun has scorching heat, (but) it has no attendants, the moon is cool and it is surrounded by the stars, here you should understand the simile of the sun, the moon and kings.

**Pattakalloditaṃ appaṃ vākyam subhāsitaṃ bhava,
khudhitassa kadannam-pi bhuttaṃ sāduraso bhava.**

**A little speech uttered when suitable can be well-spoken, even
a little spoiled food eaten when hungry can taste delicious.**

A small amount of speech, offered at precisely the right moment and to a receptive listener, can have tremendous impact and be truly well-spoken. This is compared to a simple or even slightly spoiled meal, which tastes delicious and satisfying to someone who is truly hungry. The value is not in the intrinsic grandeur of the words or food but in their perfect suitability to the need of the moment. Wisdom in speech involves knowing not just what to say, but when and to whom to say it for maximum benefit.

**Satthakā pi bahuvācā nādarā bahubhāṇino,
sopakāram py udāsīnaṃ, nanu diṭṭhaṃ nadījalaṃ?**

Even beneficial speech is not esteemed when spoken too much,
is not the water of the river, though useful, seen to be
disregarded?

If one speaks too much, even valuable advice loses its impact and is no longer valued or heeded by listeners, who become overwhelmed or annoyed. The analogy is the river: its water is fundamentally useful for life, yet because it is so abundant and is always present, people take it for granted and disregard it. Similarly, a constant stream of speech, however good, leads to the listener's disregard. Restraint and scarcity give weight to words; overflow leads to devaluation.

**Nāivelam̐ pabhāseyya, na tuṅhi sabbadā siyā,
avikiṅṅam̐ mitam̐ vākyam̐ pattakāle udīraye.**

One should not speak for too long, one should not be silent
always, one should utter speech at the right time that is
unconfused and measured.

One should not speak for too long, which leads to weariness and dilution of meaning. Conversely, one should not remain perpetually silent, which prevents sharing useful knowledge and fostering connection. The ideal is to speak at the appropriate time, offering speech that is measured, clear and concise. This balanced approach ensures that one's words are heard, understood and respected, knowing both when to contribute and when to listen.

**Icchitabbesu kammesu vācāya kusalaṃ mūlaṃ,
vācāya kusale naṭṭhe, icchitabbaṃ na sijjhati.**

**In words and deeds that are desirable skill is the root, when
skillful speech is lost, what is desired does not succeed.**

Desirable words and deeds refer to good aims, both worldly and spiritual. For these to succeed, the root cause is skillful communication, by speaking truthfully, harmoniously and encouragingly. If the root of skillful speech is neglected or lost, either through lying, divisiveness, or harshness, then even the best-laid plans and intentions will fail. Projects depend on cooperation, trust and clear guidance, all of which are fostered or destroyed by speech. Thus, mastering speech is not secondary; it is the essential groundwork for all achievement.

**Hatthapādā siro piṭṭhi kucchi, pañca ime janā
mukham evūpasevanti, sadā va anusāsītā.**

**Hands and feet, head, back and stomach, these five fellows
serve the mouth, they are always directed (by it).**

The five key parts of the body which are the hands, feet, head, back and stomach are described as fellows who constantly serve the mouth. They carry out its commands: the hands work, the feet travel, the head plans, the back bears burdens and the stomach digests food, all ultimately directed by the intentions formed and expressed by speech. The verse is a caution: speech is the commander of the entire person. Unwholesome speech sets the body on harmful tasks, while wholesome speech directs it toward good.

6. Dhanam Wealth (6 Verses)

75 [stm.]

**Saddhāghanam sīladhanam hiri ottappiyam dhanam
sutadhanañ-ca cāgo ca paññā, ve sattamañ dhanam.**

The seven true wealths: those of faith, virtue, conscience,
concern, learning, charity and wisdom.

The seven are listed as a progressive path: Faith provides the initial trust to undertake the spiritual journey. Virtue establishes the moral foundation for peace and good rebirth. Conscience and Concern are the twin guardians of ethics, fostering self-restraint. Learning is the acquisition of the teachings. Charity is the practice of generosity that loosens attachment. Wisdom is the culminating wealth and is the penetrating insight into the true nature of reality. Unlike worldly riches, these treasures cannot be stolen, decay, or cause strife.

**Itthīnañ-ca dhanam rūpaṃ, purisānam dhanam kulaṃ,
uragānam dhanam viṣam, bhūpālānam dhanam balaṃ,
bhikkhūnañ-ca dhanam sīlam, Brāhmaṇānam dhanam vijjā.**

The wealth of women is their beauty, the wealth of men is their family, the wealth of snakes is their venom, the wealth of lords of the earth is their strength, the wealth of monastics is their virtue, the wealth of Brahmins is their knowledge.

For women in a traditional social context, beauty is their primary social capital. For men, family lineage and honour are paramount. A snake's power and defense lie in its venom. A ruler's power is his military and political strength. For a monastic, however, the true wealth is not external but internal: moral virtue. For a Brahmin, it is sacred knowledge. This places the spiritual assets of the monk and the Brahmin at the end, implying a hierarchy where internal qualities surpass external attributes.

**Na rūpaṁ na ca paññāṇaṁ, na ca kulañ-ca sambhavo,
kāle vipattisampatte, dhanam-eva visesakaṁ.**

Not beauty, not wisdom, not family, or birth, in times of good
and bad fortune, wealth is truly distinguishing.

When facing life's inevitable ups and downs such as moments of crisis or opportunity then beauty, wisdom and noble birth often pale in practical utility compared to ready money. Wealth becomes the decisive, distinguishing factor that determines one's options, security and influence. This is a clear-eyed acknowledgment of reality. It serves as a caution: while spiritual qualities are supreme for liberation, one underestimates the role of material resources in mundane life at one's peril, suggesting the need for balanced stewardship.

**Dhanahīnaṃ caḥe mittā puttadārā saḥodarā,
dhanavantāṃ va sevanti, dhanāṃ loke mahāsakhā.**

Friends, children, wives and companions abandon one who has lost his wealth, they serve only the wealthy, wealth is the main thing³¹ in the world.

When a person loses their wealth, they are often abandoned by those closest to them: friends, spouse, children and even siblings. These same individuals will eagerly serve and flatter someone who is wealthy. The concluding statement, wealth is the main thing in the world, is a declaration of this sad truth, not a celebration of it. It exposes the fickle and conditional nature of much social attachment, urging discernment about where true loyalty lies.

³¹ Lit: the great branch.

**Sattā sadūpasevanti sodakaṃ vāpi ādikaṃ,
sabhogaṃ sadhanañ-ceva, tucchā te ce jahanti te.**

People always frequent a tank and so on that has water, and also one with riches and wealth, (but) if empty they abandon them.

Just as people will frequent a well or pond as long as it holds water but abandon it when it runs dry, so too do they associate with a person only as long as that person possesses wealth and resources. The analogy reveals a transactional view of human connection: presence is maintained for what can be drawn from the source. When the source is perceived as empty or no longer useful, it is deserted. This teaching reinforces the unreliable nature of seeking security and companionship through external possessions.

**Attanā va katā lakkhī, alakkhī attanā katā,
na hi lakkhiṃ alakkhiṃ-ca añño aññassa kārako.**

**Good luck is made by oneself, bad luck is made by oneself,
another does not make good luck and bad luck for another.**

This rejects the idea of fate or luck imposed by external forces, gods, or other people. Instead, it declares that one's own condition, whether fortunate or unfortunate, is primarily the result of one's own past actions, speech and thoughts. The verse therefore empowers the individual: you are the author of your own destiny. This understanding removes the ground for blame or helplessness and places the impetus for change squarely on one's present choices, aligning with the teaching about deeds and their results.

7. Deso A Country (7 Verses)

81 [adm.]

**Dhanavā sottiyo rājā nadī vejjo tathā—ime
pañca yattha na vijjanti, na tattha divasaṃ vase.**

A wealthy person, a scholar, a king, a river and likewise a
physician—where these five are not found, there one should
not dwell even for a day.

A wealthy person represents access to capital, trade and economic activity. A scholar provides access to education, wisdom and spiritual guidance. A king represents the rule of law, security and social order. A river ensures a vital water supply for drinking, agriculture and cleanliness. A physician provides healthcare and the means to treat illness. The absence of any one of these creates a significant deficiency, but the absence of all five renders a place unfit for civilised life.

**Yattha dese na sammāno, na pīti na ca bandhavo,
na ca vijjāgamo koci, na tattha divasaṃ vase.**

Wherever in a country there is no respect, no joy, and no relative, and no coming by knowledge, there one should not dwell even for a day.

One should not live where there is no respect for individuals, as this leads to conflict and indignity. The absence of communal happiness indicates a dreary, oppressive atmosphere. Having no relatives or friends means a lack of social support and belonging. Most crucially, a place where one cannot acquire knowledge, whether practical, worldly or spiritual, stunts growth and purpose. A land devoid of these four qualities is a cultural and spiritual desert, offering no nourishment for the heart or mind, making it unworthy even of a short stay.

**Amānanā yattha siyā, santānaṃ avamānanā,
hīnasamānanā vāpi, na tattha divasaṃ vase.**

Wherever there would be dishonouring, disrespecting of good people, or honouring of the inferior, there one should not dwell even for a day.

One should not live where there is widespread disrespect, as this corrodes social harmony. More specifically, it condemns an environment where good, virtuous people are disparaged or held in low esteem. This indicates a society that rejects ethical values. Conversely, it also warns against a place where inferior, foolish or unprincipled people are honoured and respected. This represents a society with inverted values, where vice is rewarded over virtue. Such a place is not for anyone seeking to live a righteous life.

**Desam-osajja gacchanti sīhā sappurisā gajā,
tattheva nidhanam yanti kākā kāpurisā migā.**

Lions, good people, elephants, having left their country, go
forth; crows, bad people and animals pass to destruction right
there.

Lions, good people and elephants, all symbols of strength, dignity and intelligence, move to a country with purpose and independence; they go to it freely and shape their place within it. In contrast, crows, bad people and animals passively die or are trapped by their environment; they merely end up there and are confined by it, living without agency. A superior person actively chooses and influences their surroundings, while an inferior person is defined and limited by theirs.

**Yatthālaso ca dakkho ca, sūro bhīru ca pūjijā,
na santo tattha vasanti, avisesakare nare.**

Wherever both the lazy and the skilfull, the heroic and the cowardly are worshipped, there the good do not dwell, as no distinction is made between people.

A place that bestows equal honour upon the lazy and the skillful, the heroic and the cowardly, demonstrates a failure to distinguish between valuable and worthless qualities. When effort is not rewarded nor vice censured, it creates a perverse incentive system that discourages excellence and integrity. Good people seek a community where merit is acknowledged and moral distinctions are clear, as these conditions are essential for growth and a just society.

**Calaty-ekena pādena tiṭṭhaty-ekena paṇḍito:
nāsamikkhya param̐ ṭhānaṃ, pubbam-āyatanaṃ caje.**

The wise one moves one foot while keeping one foot firm:
without taking note of the next place, he should not abandon
the old ground.

The image of standing firmly on one foot while keeping one foot firm symbolises a person who is established, resolute and not easily unsettled.

The wise person does not abandon their current position: whether a physical home, a job, or a stage in life merely on the speculation of something better. This is a principle of prudent management, warning against the restlessness that trades certain footing for uncertain prospects.

**Ṭhānabhaṭṭhā na sobhante, dantā kesā nakhā narā;
iti viññāya matimā saṭhānaṃ na lahuṃ caje.**

The teeth, hair and nails of people, when fallen from their position, do not look beautiful; knowing this, the thoughtful one does not lightly abandon his own place.

Teeth, hair and nails are only useful and look beautiful when they are in their proper, natural place on the body. Once detached, they become worthless and unsightly. Similarly, a person's own position, their rightful place, vocation, or role where their skills and virtues are effective, is where they find purpose and distinction. A thoughtful person understands this and does not lightly abandon their station, knowing that uprooting themselves without cause is like hair which loses its beauty and usefulness when cut off.

8. Nissayo Dependence (8 Verses)

88 [ana., stm.]

**Guṇe sabbaññutulyo pi sīdaty-eko anissayo—
anagghaṃ ratanaṃ maṇi hemaṃ nissāya sobhate.**

Even one equal to the all-knowing one in virtue languishes if
alone and unsupported—(even) a priceless jewel gem (only)
shines when set in gold.

A person possessing virtues equal to an omniscient being will still languish or fail to flourish without a supportive environment. No matter how perfect, a jewel's brilliance is only fully revealed when expertly set in gold. The gold represents the necessary support system—respectful disciples, generous patrons or a harmonious Saṅgha. The teaching is that inner virtue requires conducive external conditions to manifest its full benefit and radiance in the world.

**Na seve pharusam̐ sāmim̐, tam̐ pi seve na maccharim̐,
tato niggaṇhikam̐ sāmim̐, nevāpagaṇhikam̐ tato.**

You should not serve a harsh master, nor serve a selfish one,
and then neither a censorious master, and then not one who
makes no effort.

The worst is a harsh, cruel master, whose service brings immediate suffering. Next is a selfish master, who hoards benefits and gives nothing in return. Then comes a censorious master, whose constant criticism is demoralising. Finally, one should avoid a master who makes no effort, as such laziness indicates a lack of purpose and provides no opportunity for learning or advancement. The character of one's leader or teacher is critical to one's own development.

**Parokkhe guṇahantāraṃ, paccakkhe piyabhāṇinaṃ,
tādisaṃ nopaseveyya—visakumbhaṃ—palobhitaṃ.**

The one who attacks your virtue behind your back, and speaks pleasantly to your face, such a seductive one you should not serve—he is a pot of poison.

This individual attacks your reputation and virtue behind your back while using flattery and pleasant words to your face. They are likened to a pot of poison made attractive to lure the victim. Such a person is more harmful than an openly hostile one because they undermine trust and corrupt from within. Serving or associating with them leads to spiritual and social ruin. One must cultivate the discernment to see through superficial charm and recognise the hidden toxicity that can derail one's moral progress.

**Piṭṭhito 'kkam niseveyya, niseve aggiṃ kucchinā,
sāminam sabbakāyena, paralokam amāyāya.**

One should pay honour to the sun with the back (of the body),
one should pay honour to the fire with the front, one should
pay honour to the master with the whole body, one should pay
honour to the next world without deceit.

To honor the sun with the back is an act of reverence that acknowledges its life-giving power without staring into its blinding brilliance. To honor fire, you place it at the front, never turning your back on it. To honor your master, you offer service with your whole body, front and back, holding nothing back. Finally, to honor the next world you must act without deceit, with pure and genuine intention. True reverence is not a single formula but an intelligent adaptation to what is being honored.

**Na seve katapāpamhi, na sevālikavādine,
na sev' attatthapaññamhi, na seve atisantake.**

You should not serve one who does wrong, you should not serve one who speaks lies, you should not serve one wise (only) in his own benefit, one should not serve one who is too possessive.

One must avoid those who engage in wrongdoing, as their influence corrupts. Avoid those who speak lies, as they distort reality and trust. Avoid those whose wisdom is confined solely to their own benefit; such selfishness cannot guide others to true welfare. Finally, avoid those who are possessive or clinging, as their attachment will create dependency and conflict. This list safeguards the seeker by emphasizing that a worthy object of service must embody ethical conduct, truthfulness, altruistic wisdom and non-attachment.

**Mahataṃ nissayaṃ katvā, khuddako pi mahā bhave,
hemapabbataṃ nissāya hemapakkhī bhavanti te.**

After making dependence on the great, even what is small becomes great, the birds become golden through alighting on the golden mountain.

By depending upon those who are truly great in virtue, wisdom, or power even a small or insignificant person can partake of that greatness and become elevated. The analogy states that birds landing on a golden mountain take on a golden hue. This is a genuine transformation through proximity, guidance and shared values. It encourages seeking out the company of the noble and wise, as their influence uplifts and ennobles one's own character and destiny.

**Asahāyo samattho pi tejassī kiṃ karissati?
Nivātasañḥito aggi sayam-evūpasammati.**

What will a powerful one be capable of without a companion?

A fire placed where there is no wind itself dies down.

What can a powerful and energetic person truly be capable of if they are entirely alone, without a companion or supporter? A fire, even with fuel, if placed in a completely windless place, will eventually smother and die out on its own. The wind represents the external stimulation, challenge, encouragement and collaborative energy that companions provide. For one's power and virtues to achieve great things, good companionship is essential. It is a warning against the pride of self-sufficiency that leads to solitary decline.

**Rukkhā subhūmiṃ nissāya, pupphaphalaṃ pavaḍḍhati,
sappūrisūpanissāya mahāpuññaṃ pavaḍḍhati.**

A tree, depending on good earth, increases with flowers and fruit, by depending on a good person great merit increases.

Just as a tree depends on fertile, supportive soil to grow strong, flower and bear abundant fruit, a person depends on association with true, virtuous individuals for their spiritual merit to increase. The good earth of noble friendship provides the nutrients of good example, wise advice and moral support. In such nourishing company, one's own goodness takes root, blossoms into virtuous actions and bears the fruit of immense merit, which leads to happiness in this life and beyond.

9. Mittam A Friend (16 Verses)

96 [stm.]

**Analaso acaṇḍikko asaṭho suci saccavā
aluddho atthakāmo ca, tam-uttamū uttamo naro.**

Not lazy, not fierce, not deceitful, pure, truthful, not greedy
and seeking (his own and others') benefit: that one is spoken of
as the supreme person.

A supreme person is first free from laziness, fierceness, deceit and greed which are the roots of harm and stagnation. They are then characterised by purity of conduct, unwavering truthfulness and a fundamental motivation that seeks the benefit for both themselves and others. This person is not merely pleasant or useful, but ethically sound and altruistic. Such an individual provides a foundation for trust and growth, making them the ultimate friend on any path, worldly or spiritual.

**Ahitā paṭisedho ca, hitesu ca niyojako,
byasane cāpariccāgo, saṅkhepaṃ mittalakkhaṇaṃ.**

Warding off what is unbeneficial, encouraging what is beneficial, not abandoning one in misfortune—in brief, (these are) the marks of a friend.

First, a true friend protects you from harm, actively warding off unbeneficial influences, bad decisions, or dangers. Second, they proactively encourage and guide you toward what is beneficial—virtue, learning and opportunities. Third, and most crucially, they do not abandon you in times of misfortune or difficulty. This unwavering loyalty during hardship is the ultimate test of friendship. These three marks define a relationship that is actively engaged in your welfare, not just a passive association.

**Ātūre byasane sace dubbhikkhe paraviggāhe
rājadvāre susāne ca, saṅkhepaṃ mittalakkhaṇaṃ.**

The mark of a friend, in brief, is if (one is with you) in sickness, in misfortune, in famine, in a dispute with another, at the king's gate, at a cemetery.

A true friend is present when you are sick and vulnerable, during personal misfortune, in times of famine or scarcity, when you are entangled in a dispute and need support, when you must face the intimidating authority of the king's court, and even at a cemetery, confronting loss and mortality. The friend who stands by you in these trials proves their worth not in times of ease, but when your need is greatest. Their presence is the mark of authentic companionship.

**Hitesano sumitto ca viññū ca dullabho jano,
yathosadhañ-ca sāduñ-ca rogahārī ca sajjano.**

A good and wise friend, who seeks your benefit, is a rare person, a good person, like a sweet medicine which carries off disease.

A good and wise person is described with three terms: a good friend, one who seeks your benefit, and he is wise. This combination is rare.

They are like a perfect remedy: sweet and pleasant to take, yet powerfully effective in carrying away the diseases of ignorance, poor judgment and unwholesome states. A good person in this role is not just a companion but a healing influence, actively contributing to your spiritual and moral health through their wisdom and goodwill.

**Yo dhuvāni pariccajja, adhuvānopasevati,
dhuvāni tassa nassanti, adhuvesu kathā va kā?**

He who has abandoned what endures, and serves what does not endure, he loses the things that endure, what to say about those that do not endure?

What endures refers to lasting, true values: virtue, wisdom and genuine friendships. What does not endure refers to fleeting sensual pleasures, wealth or superficial alliances. The person who neglects or abandons their enduring spiritual wealth in order to pursue transient, worldly attachments commits a grave error. The consequence is the loss of the very things that provide lasting security and happiness. If one loses the eternal for the sake of the temporary, there is no hope of preserving anything of value.

**Luddham-atthena gaṇḥeyya, thaddham-añjalikammunā,
chandānuvattiyā mūḷhaṃ, yathābhūtena paṇḍitaṃ.**

One should win over the greedy with gain, the obstinate with deference, the foolish by complying with their whims, the wise with the truth.

To win over a greedy person, one must appeal to their self-interest with material gain. To soften an obstinate or proud person, one uses formal respect and deference. To guide a foolish person, one temporarily complies with their wishes to gain their trust and ear. However, with a wise person, the only appropriate and effective method is straightforward truth. This is not manipulation but skillful means adapted to the recipient's capacity, aiming to ultimately guide all toward the truth that the wise person already recognises.

**Accābhikkhaṇasaṃsaggā asamo saraṇena ca
etena mittā jīranti akāle yācanaena ca.
Tasmā nābhikkhaṇaṃ gacche, na ca gacche cirāciraṃ,
kālena yācaṃ yāceyya, evaṃ mittā na jīyare.**

Friendships decay through excessive begging and association, through sheltering an unequal and through soliciting at the wrong time. Therefore one should not go and beg, one should not come and go, one should solicit alms at the right time, in this way friendships do not decay.

One must avoid being a burden through constant begging or over-familiarity. Visits should be neither too frequent nor too rare, maintaining a balanced and considerate presence. Most importantly, any request for help or resources should be made only at an appropriate and convenient time. By practicing such restraint, sensitivity and timing, one shows care for the relationship itself, ensuring that friendship remains a source of mutual joy and support rather than an obligation.

**Yena mittena saṃsaggā, yogakkhemo vihiyati,
pubbe v' ajjhābhavaṃ tassa rakkhe akkhīva paṇḍito.**

Through association with a (bad) friend, security decreases,
the wise one should guard against his power beforehand, like
he would guard his eyes.

Association with a false or unvirtuous friend gradually diminishes one's security, meaning both worldly well-being and, more importantly, spiritual progress and peace of mind. Such a friend leads one into unwholesome actions, wrong views and dangerous situations. The wise person is therefore advised to recognise this threat early and guard against the influence of a bad friend with the same proactive, vigilant care one would use to protect one's own eyesight. It is a call for preemptive discernment to avoid spiritual harm.

**Yena mittena saṃsaggā, yogakkhemo pavaḍḍhati,
kareyy' attasamaṃ vuttiṃ, sabbakiccesu paṇḍito.**

Through association with a (good) friend, security increases,
the wise one should do all his duties, behaving as though for
himself.

Association with a good, virtuous friend reliably causes one's security and welfare to increase. Such a friend provides protection, good advice and noble example. Therefore, the wise person should engage in all duties and responsibilities toward that friend with the same care, dedication and thoroughness as they would for themselves. This is a recognition that the welfare of a true friend is inseparable from one's own. By investing fully in the relationship, one nurtures the very source of one's own growth and safety.

**Pabbe pabbe kamen' ucchu visesarasavāggato,
tathā sumettiko sādhu, viparīto va dujjano.**

Sugarcane, sequentially from the tip, joint by joint, has a special taste, so a friendly person is good, a bad person is the opposite.

High-quality sugarcane is sweet and flavorful from the first section to the last, in an orderly, predictable way. Similarly, a good friend is reliably good throughout, their kindness, virtue and support are consistent and trustworthy in all circumstances. In stark contrast, a bad person is the opposite, he is perverse; their nature is inconsistent, unpredictable and ultimately harmful. The value of a friend, like the value of the cane, is found in their uniform and dependable quality, not in sporadic sweetness masking a bitter core.

**Teneva Muninā vuttam: dhammā ye keci lokiyā,
tathā lokuttarā ceva dhammā Nibbānagāmino,
kalyāṇamittam-āgamma sabbe te honti pāṇinaṃ,
tasmā kalyāṇamittesu kātabbo hi sadādarō.**

This was spoken by the Sage: whatever mundane qualities, and likewise supermundane qualities leading to Nibbāna there are, they come to all living beings (through) a good friend, therefore one should make good friends, and always show respect.³²

The Buddha taught that every wholesome quality, whether mundane virtues leading to happiness in this life, or the supermundane qualities of the path leading directly to Nibbāna, arises in beings through the influence and guidance of a good friend. Such a friend provides the example, instruction and encouragement necessary for growth.

Therefore, seeking out and cultivating relationships with virtuous people is the essential foundation of the entire spiritual life, deserving of constant respect and effort.

³² Cf. SN 45.2: *Sakalam-evidam, Ānanda, brahmacariyam, yadidam: kalyāṇamittatā kalyāṇasahāyatā kalyāṇasampavaṅkatā*; Ānanda, good friendship, good companionship, and good associations are the whole of the spiritual life.

**Yo 'ha ve kataññu katavedi dhīro,
kalyāṇamitto daḥhabhatti ca hoti,
dukkhitassa sakkaccaṃ karoti kiccaṃ,
tabbhāvaṃ sappurisaṃ vadanti loke.**

The steadfast one who is truly grateful and thankful, is a good friend and is firmly devoted, who respectfully does his duty for one distressed, in the world they say that one is by nature a good person.

Such an individual possesses three key attributes: deep gratitude and thankfulness, recognising and repaying kindness; the quality of being a good friend themselves with firm devotion; and the proactive compassion to respectfully attend to the needs of someone who is distressed. These are not separate acts but expressions of a single noble character. The world rightly recognises that one who embodies these traits is by nature a true person, their very being is defined by loyalty, gratitude and active care for others in difficulty.

**Hitakāro paro bandhu, bandhū pi ahito paro,
ahito dehajo byādhi, hitam-āraññam-osadham.**

A beneficial outsider is a relative, an unhelpful relative is an outsider, an unhelpful child is a disease, a beneficial child is a natural medicine.

An outsider who actively brings benefit and support is, in truth, worthy of being considered a relative. Conversely, a biological relative who is unhelpful or harmful is functionally an outsider, a stranger or even an enemy. It extends this logic to one's own child: a child who is unhelpful is a painful affliction like a disease. But a child who is beneficial is like a healing natural medicine for the family. The teaching prioritises the quality of contribution over the accident of birth, evaluating bonds by their actual fruit.

**Padumaṃ va mukhaṃ yassa, vācā candanasītaṃ,
madhu tiṭṭhati jivhagge, hadayesu halāhalaṃ—
tādisaṃ nopaseveyya, taṃ mittaṃ parivajjaye.**

That one whose face is like a lotus, whose speech is cool as sandalwood, having honey on the tip of his tongue, (but who is like) deadly poison in the hearts—such a one you should not serve, that friend should be avoided.

This person has an attractive, pleasant face and speech as soothing as sandalwood. Their words are sweet as honey. Yet, in their heart, they harbor malice or poison. This disparity between alluring exterior and toxic interior makes them supremely dangerous. Such a person is not to be served or associated with; they must be actively avoided. True friendship requires integrity, a harmony between outward appearance, speech and inner intention.

10. Dujjano A Bad Person (29 Verses)

112 [stm.]

**Katvāna kusalam kammaṃ katvānākusalam pure,
sukhitam dukkhitam hontam so bālo yo na passati.**

The one who is a fool does not see that doing good deeds,
doing bad deeds, (leads to) being happy, being unhappy.

The fool fails to perceive the most basic causal sequence in life: that good actions lead to happiness and bad actions lead to suffering. This ignorance is a failure of insight into the moral structure of reality. While others understand that present choices shape future experience, the fool lives as if actions have no consequences. This blindness is the root of all unwise behavior, trapping the individual in a cycle of creating causes for future pain while being mystified by its arrival.

**Kālakkehena hāpeti dānasīlādikaṃ jaḷo,
athiraṃ pi thiraṃ maññe, attānaṃ sassatī samaṃ.**

The stupid one neglects generosity, virtue, and so on by wasting time,³³ thinking the unstable stable, and himself eternally the same.

The fool squanders his time on trivial pursuits, putting off the cultivation of generosity and virtue which are the very practices that build future happiness and security. This neglect is fueled by a double delusion: he mistakes the unstable, impermanent nature of life and possessions for something solid and lasting, and he falsely assumes his own existence is eternal and unchanging. By failing to see impermanence, he loses the urgency to practice the Dhamma, sacrificing lasting merit for fleeting distractions.

³³ Lit.: by throwing away time.

**Bālo 'dha pāpakaṃ katvā, na taṃ chaḍḍitum-ussahe,
kiṃ byaggha-ādi gacchanto padaṃ makkhetum-ussahe.**

A fool, having done wrong here, would not make an effort to abandon it, why would a charging tiger and so on make an effort to erase his footprint?

Having committed a wrong, a fool makes no attempt to abandon the action or make amends. A fool acts according to his inherent, untamed nature without reflection or restraint. Just as a charging tiger is not worried about leaving tracks, so the fool's nature is to follow his defilements without shame or corrective effort. The question highlights the absurdity of expecting moral reform from one who identifies wholly with their unwholesome instincts.

**Niddhano pi ca kāmēti, dubbalo verikaṃ karo,
mandasattho vivādatthī—tividhaṃ mūḷhalakkhaṇaṃ.**

Though without wealth he still desires, though weak he makes
an enemy, though the sword is dull, he is quarrelsome—(this
is) the threefold sign of a fool.

This verse outlines three contradictory and self-destructive traits that signal a fool. First, he is filled with desires despite having no wealth to fulfill them. Second, though weak, he picks fights and makes enemies, ensuring his own vulnerability and defeat. Third, though ill-equipped, he is eager to quarrel, guaranteeing failure and harm. These signs reveal a profound lack of self-awareness and practical wisdom that inevitably leads to suffering.

**Anavhāyaṃ gamayanto, apucchā bahubhāsako,
attagguṇaṃ pasaṃsanti—tividhaṃ hīnalakkhaṇaṃ.**

Going without being called, without being asked speaking a lot, they praise their own virtues—(this is) the threefold sign of a despicable person.

The three marks of a despicable or base person all relate to intrusive and self-aggrandising behavior. First, intruding where one has not been invited shows a lack of respect for boundaries. Second, speaking voluminously without being asked demonstrates egotism and poor judgment. Third, praising one's own virtues is the height of conceit and a sure sign of their absence. These behaviors stem from an inflated sense of self-importance and a complete lack of the humility and social grace that characterise a refined individual.

**Yathā c’ udumbarā pakkā bahirattakam-eva ca,
anto kimilapūraṇā, evaṃ dujjanadhammatā.**

**Just as a ripe fig on the outside is nicely coloured, but inside is
full of worms, so is the nature of the bad person.**

A ripe fig may look perfect and appealing on the outside, but inside it can be rotten and teeming with worms. Similarly, a bad person may present a charming, virtuous, or respectable exterior to the world, while their inner character is corrupted by greed, hatred and delusion. This warns against being deceived by appearances and emphasises that true quality is a matter of inner substance, not outer show. One must look beyond the surface in judging character.

**Yad-ūṇakaṁ saṇati taṁ, yaṁ pūraṁ santam-eva taṁ,
aḍḍhakumbhūpamo bālo, pūrakumbho va paṇḍito.**

**What is deficient makes a noise, what is full is quiet, a fool is
like a half-filled pot, a wise one like a full pot.**

A deficient or half-filled pot makes a loud noise when struck, while a full pot is silent. Likewise, a fool, who is empty or shallow in knowledge and virtue, is boastful, argumentative and quick to speak without substance. A wise person, full of understanding and virtue, is calm, quiet and speaks only when it is meaningful. The noise of the fool is the sound of his own emptiness; the silence of the wise is the quiet confidence of true depth.

**Budhehi sāsamāno pi, khalo bahutaketavo,
ghaṁsiyamāno p’ aṅgāro nimmalattaṁ na gacchati.**

Though being advised by the wise, a villain has numerous deceptions, (just as) burning coal does not become free from impurity.

Even when admonished by the wise, a wicked person does not reform; instead, he devises numerous schemes to maintain his harmful ways or to appear compliant while plotting otherwise. A burning coal does not become clean, it only becomes more black and dirty as it turns to ashes; it. Similarly, external pressure or advice cannot purify a fundamentally corrupt character. Their wickedness is ingrained, and they respond to correction not with remorse, but with further deceit and strategising.

**Mūlhasissopadesena, kunārī bharaṇena ca,
khalasattūhi saṁyogā, paṇḍito py-avasīdati.**

Through advising a foolish pupil, through supporting a bad woman, through association with a villainous enemy, a wise man sinks down.

Even a wise person can be brought down by bad associations. First, by trying to advise a foolish pupil who will not listen, which is a draining, futile waste of energy. Second, supporting a bad or immoral woman leads to entanglement in scandal, distraction and loss of resources. Third, associating with a villain, perhaps out of overconfidence or a desire to reform them, exposes one to treachery and harm. Wisdom alone is not armor against such corrosive influences; we need discernment in choosing our relationships.

**Cārutā paradārāya, dhanam loka-t-āpattiyā,³⁴
pasutā sādhunāsāya—khale khalatarā guṇā.**

Being charmed by another’s wife, having wealth that offends the world, being occupied with destroying the good—in a villain, these are the most villainous qualities.

To be obsessed with another’s wife violates sacred trust and social harmony. To possess wealth in a way that causes widespread resentment or harm through exploitation, arrogance or injustice, turns prosperity into a social poison. To be dedicated to destroying good people or virtuous institutions is an attack on the very foundation of a moral society. These are not minor flaws but the pinnacle of villainy, as they actively corrupt the pillars of the economic and ethical order.

³⁴ This is parsed according to Bechert and Braun’s note, although the insertion of *-t-* between vowels is very unusual.

**Ito hassataram̃ loke kiñci tassa na vijjati:
dujjano ti ca yaṃ āha sujanaṃ dujjano sayam̃.**

**In the world nothing more hilarious is found than this: a bad
person who himself says a good person is a bad person.**

This verse exposes the ironic comedy of hypocrisy and self-deception. It declares that in all the world, there is nothing more laughable than the spectacle of a bad person who says a good person is a bad person. The humor arises from the complete lack of self-awareness. The villain, projecting his own faults onto the virtuous, condemns in others the very qualities he himself embodies. His judgment is not merely mistaken but self-incriminating. Yet the laughter is tinged with tragedy, for his blindness traps him in his own defilements.

123 [ana., stm.]

**Na vinā paravādena ramanti dujjanā khalu,
na sā sabbarase bhutvā, vināsuddhena tussati.**

Without blaming others indeed bad people do not find delight,
having eaten all flavours, a dog is not satisfied without what is
impure.

Just as a dog, after eating every kind of wholesome food, still seeks out and is only truly satisfied by filth and impure scraps, a bad person cannot find delight or contentment unless they are engaged in blaming, slandering, or finding fault in others. Their pleasure is parasitic, dependent on tearing others down. Wholesome activity or remaining peaceful brings them no joy; their nature compulsively seeks the impure nourishment of malice and criticism to feel complete.

**Tappate yāti sambandham, dravībhavaty-avanatam,
mudu dujjanacittam, na kiṃ lohena pamīyate.**

Heading to bondage he is tormented, he is fluid when
depressed, the mind of a bad person is malleable, why should it
not be judged by its metal?

The bad person's mind heads toward mental bondage through craving and vice and is tormented by it. It becomes fluid or weak when depressed, lacking steadfast principle. It is malleable, easily shaped by defilements and external temptations. Just as one judges the quality of metal by testing it, one should judge the character of a person by observing this inherent instability and weakness. The inner metal of his mind is flawed.

**Tasmā dujjanasamsaggaṃ āsīvisam-ivoragaṃ,
ārakā parivajjeyya, bhūtakāmo vicakkaṇo.**

Therefore association with a bad person is like association with a poisonous snake, a discerning one, loving life, should avoid (both) from afar.

Bad company must be avoided entirely because association with a bad person is as dangerous as handling a venomous snake. Both can cause sudden, severe and potentially fatal harm. A discerning person who values their life and well-being, both worldly and spiritual, will keep a great distance from such toxic individuals. This is not mere caution but a vital strategy for self-preservation, recognising that the influence of the wicked is passively poisonous and actively treacherous.

**Dujjanena hi saṃsaggaṃ sattutā pi na yujjati,
tatto va ḍayhaty-aṅgāro sante kāḷāyate karo.**

Association with a bad person is not suitable, even for an enemy, just as a hand is burned black by a glowing coal.

Even an enemy should avoid associating with a bad person because such association is inherently harmful and counterproductive. If one extends a hand to handle a hot coal, even with intent to use it against a foe, one's own hand will be burned. Similarly, any engagement with a villain, regardless of motive, results in self-inflicted damage to one's reputation, morality and peace of mind. The villain's harmful nature is indiscriminate; proximity alone is a liability.

127 [ana., rh.q.]

**Dujjano vajjanīyo va, vijjāyālaṅkato pi ce,
maṇinālaṅkato santo sappo, kiṃ nu bhayaṅkaro?**

A bad person is to be avoided, even if adorned with
knowledge, a snake adorned with a jewel, is he not still
dangerous?

A villain educated and adorned with knowledge is still a villain and his learning may simply make him a more effective deceiver. Just as a snake decorated with a precious jewel remains a venomous snake, which may even invite victims closer. Therefore, the fundamental character is what must be evaluated. Embellishments of status, knowledge, or wealth should not distract from the assessment of virtue, which is the important quality to look for.

**Aggino dahato dāyaṃ sakhā bhavati māluto,
so eva dīpaṃ nāseti—khale nattheva mittatā.**

The wind is a friend when given to a blazing fire, (but) it also
extinguishes an oil lamp—there is no true friendship with a
villain.

Wind can be a friend to a blazing fire, making it burn stronger. But that same wind will also extinguish a small, fragile oil lamp. Similarly, a villain may appear helpful in certain strong situations such as feeding one's pride or aggression, but he will inevitably betray or destroy one in a moment of vulnerability or need. There is no consistent goodwill or loyalty; his association is conditional and ultimately destructive, making true friendship undesirable.

**Sappo duṭṭho khalo duṭṭho, sappā duṭṭhataro khalo;
mantosadhīvasā sappo, khalo kenupasammati?**

A snake is vicious, a villain is vicious, (but) a villain is more
vicious than a snake; a snake is subdued by mantras and
medicine, by what can a villain be subdued?

A villain is more dangerous than a snake. Both are vicious, but a snake's
venom can often be counteracted with mantras or medicine and its
behavior is predictable according to its nature. A villain's malice,
however, is more insidious, unpredictable and purposive. His corruption
stems from conscious choice and complex defilements that no simple
antidote can cure. There is no reliable remedy, making him a greater
threat to social and spiritual order than even a reptile.

**Hadayaṭṭhena sutena khalo neva susīlavā;
madhunā koṭaraṭṭhena nimbo kiṃ madhuro bhava?**

A villain is not virtuous through having learning set in the heart; does a neem tree become sweet by having honey set in a hollow?

A villain may have learning memorised or even understood intellectually, but if he does not embody it through conduct, it is meaningless. The analogy is the neem tree, known for its bitter leaves. Even if you pour honey into a hollow in its trunk, the tree itself does not become sweet; its nature remains unchanged. Similarly, external knowledge does not alter a wicked person's fundamental character.

**Asataṁ sampayogena santo pi asanto bhave;
maggo kacavarayutto ujum-pi asādhu bhave.**

Even a good person through connection with a bad person may become bad; even a straight path may become bad when filled with rubbish.

Even a good person can be corrupted by constant contact with a bad one, as negative habits and views are gradually absorbed. The comparison is to a straight path that becomes foul and impassable when littered with rubbish. Our environment and companions shape our mind. This underscores the critical importance of spiritual friendship.

To preserve one's own goodness, one must be vigilant about the company one keeps, as moral purity can be contaminated by persistent exposure to corruption.

**Pūtimacchaṃ kusaggena yo naro upanayhati
kusā pi pūti vāyanti, evaṃ bālupasevanā.**

The person who wraps putrid fish with a blade of sacred grass
(finds) even the sacred grass smells putrid, so it is with those
who associate with fools.

If you wrap a rotten fish in fragrant sacred grass, the grass itself will soon take on a foul smell. Similarly, a person who associates closely with fools will inevitably adopt their foolish views, bad habits and poor reputation. Purity is fragile and can be overwhelmed by impurity. The verse advises that one cannot engage with corruption without being stained by it. To remain wholesome, one must avoid the source of the stench altogether.

**Bālaṁ na passe na suṇe, na ca bālena saṁvase,
bālenālāpasallāpaṁ na kare na ca rocaḥe.³⁵**

May I not see or hear a fool, may I not dwell together with a fool, may I not like or make conversation with a fool.

This verse expresses a deep aspiration to avoid all contact with fools: not to see them, hear them, live with them, or engage in conversation with them. This is not malice but a profound strategy of self-protection, recognising the distracting, irritating and corrupting influence of foolishness. It is the practical application of the previous warnings: actively creating boundaries to safeguard one's own peace of mind and spiritual progress from unwise company.

³⁵ The opposite of this and the next two verses occur in the next chapter, at 148-150.

**Anayaṃ neti dummedho, adhurāyaṃ niyuñjati,
dunnayo seyyaso hoti, sammā vutto pakuppati,
vinayaṃ so na jānāti, sādhu tena adassanaṃ.**

The unintelligent one leads to misfortune, he is joined with what is unstable, his method is even more difficult, when rightly spoken to he becomes angry, he does not know the discipline, because of that he is best not met with.

The unintelligent person leads himself and others into misfortune. He is attached to unstable, unreliable things. His methods are difficult and unproductive. When given good advice, he reacts with anger rather than gratitude. He lacks internal discipline. Because he is unreachable and volatile, the wisest course is to avoid meeting with him altogether. Engagement is pointless and risky, as it offers no chance of correction and every chance of provoking conflict or being dragged into his misguided schemes.

135 [sim., stm.]

**Yāvajīvaṃ pi ce bālo paṇḍitaṃ payⁱrupāsati,
na so Dhammaṃ vijānāti, dabbī sūparasaṃ yathā.**

Even if a fool attends on a wise man for his whole life he does not learn Dhamma, just as a spoon does not learn the taste of curry.

A fool can spend his entire life in the physical presence of a wise teacher, performing the duties of attendance, yet never truly understanding the Dhamma. The spoon, though it sits in the soup pot all through the cooking, never knows the taste of the soup. Similarly, wisdom is not absorbed by mere proximity; it requires an internal capacity for reflection, humility and application. But the fool's mind is incapable of assimilating the essence of the teaching.

136 [sim., stm.]

**Phalaṃ ve kadaliṃ hanti, hanti veḷunaḷaṃ phalaṃ,
sakkāro kāpurisaṃ³⁶ hanti, gabbho assatarīṃ yathā.**

The fruit indeed destroys the banana, the fruit destroys the bamboo, the reed,³⁷ honour destroys a bad person, just as its offspring destroys a mule.

The banana tree and bamboo are destroyed by their own fruit, which weighs them down or consumes their resources. Similarly, a bad person is often destroyed by the honours, wealth, or status they receive. Lacking the virtue and wisdom to handle such gifts responsibly, they become arrogant, reckless, or a target for envy, leading to their downfall. Like a sterile mule that ends a bloodline, honour without virtue ends a person's true legacy and well-being.

³⁶ We should probably read *kāposam*, which would give *mavipulā*.

³⁷ SN reads: *Phalaṃ ve kadaliṃ hanti, phalaṃ veḷuṃ, phalaṃ naḷaṃ*.

**Sunakho sunakhaṃ disvā, dantaṃ dasseti hiṃsitaṃ,
dujjano dujjanaṃ disvā, rosayaṃ hiṃsam-icchati.**

A dog, having seen (another) dog, bares his teeth to hurt him;
a fool, having seen (another) fool, is angry, and wishes to hurt
him.

Just as one dog seeing another will often bare its teeth and growl, seeking to intimidate or attack, a fool upon encountering another fool is immediately filled with anger and a desire to harm or dominate. This reaction stems from insecurity and the lack of higher principles that would foster cooperation or respect. Their interaction is governed by base aggression rather than reason or goodwill, ensuring conflict and mutual harm.

**Maṇḍūko pi nukko sīho, sukaro pi nukko dīpi,
bilāro sadiso byaggho, duppañño pi na paññavā.**

A frog is not a lion,³⁹ a boar is not a leopard, a cat is not the same as a tiger, one lacking wisdom is not wise.⁴⁰

A frog, though it may puff itself up, is not a lion. A boar is not a graceful leopard. A domestic cat is not a tiger. In the same way, a person who merely lacks wisdom is categorically not a wise person. The verse warns against mistaking the appearance, pretension, or minor capability for the real thing. True qualities like courage, grace, strength and wisdom are intrinsic and substantial, not to be confused with their feeble imitations.

³⁸ Bechert and Braun flag this and the following verse as being impossible to reconstruct accurately, and therefore they print it as found in the manuscripts. Exactly what *nukko* means, or *piññe* and *naye* in the next verse is not clear to me, the translation and commentary are therefore tentative.

³⁹ *Nukko* doesn't occur in the dictionaries. It could reasonably be taken as *na* + *ukka*, but *ukka* doesn't yield any good meaning in the context. However, I am taking the *n* in *nukko* as having a negative connotation.

⁴⁰ Gray's translation is presumably based on the *nissaya*: A frog sitting on its rumps is not a lion; a hog grunting is not a leopard; a cat is not a tiger on account of its similarity to one; he is not wise who is of little wisdom.

**Maṇḍūko pi sīho viya, kāko gaṇhe piñṇe piñṇe,
bālo ca paṇḍito viya, dhīro pucche ṇaye ṇaye.**

A frog may appear like a lion, a crow may take piece by piece
(?), a fool may appear like a wise one, a steadfast one may
question point by point (?).⁴¹

A frog can seem like a lion when it puffs up its chest. A crow can appear to gather things methodically, piece by piece. A fool can, at times, mimic the demeanor of a wise person. A steadfast person might question things point by point, showing discernment. Superficial behaviors can be misleading. One must look beyond initial impressions to see the true nature: the frog is still a frog, the crow is still a scavenger, and the fool's mimicry does not equate to wisdom.

⁴¹ No words are listed in the Pāḷi or Sanskrit dictionaries as beginning with *ṇ-*. Gray: A frog is like a lion; if a crow seize it, it begins to squeak: a fool is like a learned man; if a wise man question him, he says, "Sir! sir!"

**Kāko duṭṭho sakuṇesu, ghare duṭṭho ca mūsiko,
vānaro ca vane duṭṭho, manussesu ca Brahmaṇo.**

A crow is vicious amongst birds, a rat is vicious in the houses,
a monkey is vicious in the forest, a Brahmin amongst human
beings.

In every group, there is a type that causes a particular nuisance: the crow among birds is noisy and thieving; the rat in houses is destructive and stealthy; the monkey in the forest is mischievous and chaotic. The final line delivers a satirical punch: among humans, it is the Brahmin. This targets the Brahmin who is puffed up with caste pride but devoid of true virtue, the hypocrite who causes discord through arrogance and empty claims of superiority.

11. Sujano A Good Person (10 Verses)

141 [stm.]

**Tiṇāni bhūmi codakaṃ, catutthī vākyasuṭṭhutaṃ,
etāni hi sataṃ gehe, nocchijjante kadāci pi.**

Grass, earth and water, and fourthly, excellent words, these, in
the home of the good, are never exhausted.

The first three items represent fundamental, life-sustaining resources: fodder for animals, soil for cultivation and water for all needs. Their never-exhausted supply signifies the household's harmonious relationship with nature and its sustainable, generous stewardship. The fourth, excellent words, means the home is filled with truthful, kind and Dhamma-infused speech, a resource that nourishes the mind and spirit.

This is a home where both material and spiritual provisions are
abundant and shared freely.

**Ambuṁ pivanti no najjo, rukkhā khādanti no phalaṁ,
meghā kadāci no sassaṁ, paratthāya satam dhanam.**

They do not drink up (all) the water of the rivers, they do not eat (all) the fruits from the trees, the rain never (consumes) the crop, the wealth of the good is for the benefit of others.

The good person does not consume resources to depletion, like draining a river or stripping a tree bare. Their wealth, like timely rain, is a blessing that fosters growth in others. Rain nourishes the crop without consuming it; similarly, the wealth of the good is used charitably to support and uplift the community, not hoarded for personal indulgence.

This defines true prosperity: not as possession, but as a means for benevolent circulation. The good person is a custodian, not a consumer, ensuring abundance for all.

**Guṇā kubbanti dūtattaṃ dūre pi vasataṃ satam,
ketake gandham-āghāya, gacchanti bhamarā sayam.**

Virtues act as messengers for the good, even when they dwell far away, the bees on their own go to the aroma of the screw-pine.⁴²

Even if a good person lives in seclusion, their reputation for integrity, kindness and wisdom travels far and wide, attracting those who value such qualities. The simile of bees instinctively drawn to the scent of the fragrant screw-pine flower is apt. Just as the flower does not call the bees, but its nature draws them, the inherent qualities of a good person naturally attracts the respectful, the seekers and the virtuous, creating a community of goodness without ostentation.

⁴² The fragrant screw-pine is known for its intoxicating scent, which is a floral, honey-like aroma that has been used in perfumes and traditional practices for centuries. The plant's flowers are often sought after for their pleasant aroma, which is a key factor in attracting pollinators like bees and butterflies.

**Ākiṇṇo pi asabbhīdha asaṃsaṭṭho va bhaddako,
bahunāsannajātena gacche n’ ummattaken’ iva.**

Though hemmed in here the fortunate one does not mix with the unvirtuous, one should not go around close to a group, like a madman.

Even when surrounded by the unvirtuous in a particular place or social setting, the good person possesses the inner strength not to mix or assimilate with them. He maintains his ethical integrity and composure. One should not wander too close to a crowd, behaving as if oblivious, like a madman. This cautions against naive immersion in corrupt company. The good person is socially aware and intentionally selective, preserving their purity by maintaining a wise distance from corrupting influences.

**Pāpamitte vivajjetvā, bhajeyy' uttamapuggalaṃ,
ovāde cassa tiṭṭheyya, patthento acalaṃ sukhaṃ.**

Having shunned bad friends, one should associate with the
supreme person, one should stand by his advice, wishing for
unshakeable happiness.

One must consciously avoid and shun bad friends, whose influence leads to decline. Then one must actively seek out and associate with a supreme person, an individual of profound virtue and wisdom. The final instruction is to internalise their teaching and live by his advice. The motivation is the highest goal, wishing for the unshakeable happiness of Nibbāna. This frames spiritual friendship not as social preference, but as the essential methodology for achieving liberation.

**Yathā ca panasā pakkā bahikaṇḍakam-eva ca,
anto amatapūraṇo, evaṃ sujanadhammatā.**

**Just as ripe jackfruit is thorny on the outside, but inside is full
of nectar, so is the nature of the good person.**

The good person is like a ripe jackfruit: externally, it may be rough, thorny and unattractive, indicating that a truly good person may not be superficially charming. Their outward manner might be blunt or unadorned. However, inside is pure nectar: sweet, nourishing and sublime. This symbolises the profound goodness, compassion and wisdom that resides within. The verse teaches that true worth is internal, and one must often look past a rough exterior to find the treasure of a noble heart.

**Tagarañ-ca palāsenā, yo naro upanayhati,
pattā pi gandhaṃ vāyanti, evaṃ dhīrūpasevanā.**

That person who wraps incense with a *palāsa* leaf (finds) even the leaf smells fragrant, so it is with those who associate with the steadfast.⁴³

If you wrap fragrant incense in a plain leaf, the leaf itself becomes perfumed. Similarly, a person who associates with the steadfast, wise and virtuous will inevitably absorb their good qualities, their fragrance of virtue. This underscores the transformative power of good company.

Unlike the corrupting influence of fools, association with the wise elevates and purifies. It is a natural process where one's character is improved simply by proximity to excellence, making such association the most profitable of investments.

⁴³ The opposite of this and the next three verses occur in the previous chapter, at 132-135.

**Dhīraṃ passe suṇe dhīraṃ, dhīrena saha saṃvase,
dhīrenālāpasallāpaṃ, taṃ kare tañ-ca rocaye.**

May I see a steadfast one, may I hear a steadfast one, may I
dwell together with a steadfast one, may I like and make
conversation with him.

The wish to avoid fools expresses a deep yearning for the opposite: to see, hear, live with and converse with the steadfast and wise. This is a conscious choice to orient one's entire sensory and social world toward what is ennobling. The repetition of steadfast one emphasises the value of stability, wisdom and resilience. The desire for conversation highlights that learning happens through dialogue. This speaks of a commitment to seek out the environments and relationships that foster growth.

**Nayaṃ nayati medhāvī, adhurāyaṃ na yuñjati,
sunayo seyyaso hoti, sammā vutto na kuppati,
vinayaṃ so pajānāti, sādhu tena samāgamo.**

The intelligent one leads to good fortune, he is not joined with what is unstable, his method is even better, when rightly spoken to he does not become angry, he knows the discipline, because of that he is best met with.

The intelligent one is characterised by positive agency and stability. He leads to good fortune, both for himself and others. He avoids unstable, unreliable paths and people. His methods are superior and effective.

When given rightful criticism, he responds without anger, demonstrating humility and a love for learning. He understands and embodies discipline. Because of these traits, association with him is declared to be best met with because it is beneficial, safe and conducive to growth in every way.

150 [sim., stm.]

**Appakena pi ce viññū paṇḍitaṃ pay¹rupāsati,
khippaṃ Dhammaṃ vijānāti, jivhā sūparaṃ yathā.**

If a discerning man attends on a wise man even for a little while, he quickly learns the Dhamma, just as the tongue learns the taste of curry.

Here, a discerning person, even with a brief period of attendance upon a wise teacher, quickly grasps the essence of the Dhamma. The simile is the tongue, the organ of taste: it instantly knows flavor upon contact. Similarly, a mind that is receptive, humble and keenly intelligent has the capacity to absorb profound truth rapidly. This celebrates the potential of the worthy student and affirms that true teaching meets a prepared mind with immediate transformative effect. The difference lies not in the teacher or the time, but in the quality of the student's understanding.

12. Balaṁ Strength (5 Verses)

151 [stm.]

**Bāhubalañ-ca amaccaṁ, bhogaṁ abhijaccaṁ balaṁ,
imehi catubalehi paññā ve seṭṭhataṁ balaṁ.**

Wisdom is the best of strengths, along with these four
strengths: the strength of arms and counsel, the strength of
riches and high birth.

There are four conventional strengths: physical might (arms), strategic counsel (ministers), material wealth and the social advantage of noble birth. These are the worldly bases of influence and security. However, wisdom is the supreme strength. Unlike the others, which can be lost, misused, or turned against one, wisdom is an inner, imperishable power. It guides the use of all other strengths toward beneficial ends, prevents their misuse, and provides the ultimate security of right understanding.

**Balaṁ pakkhīnam-ākāso, macchānaṁ udakaṁ balaṁ,
dubbalassa balaṁ rājā, kumārānaṁ rudaṁ balaṁ.**

For birds the sky is a strength, for fish water is a strength, for
the weak a king is a strength, for children tears are a
strength.⁴⁴

For birds, the open sky is their strength or support, it is the medium that allows them to exercise their power of flight. For fish, water is their strength or support. For a weak person, the protection and authority of a king becomes their strength or support. For a child, tears are a strength or support, as they effectively summon care and aid. Strength here is a skillful tool that enables a being to thrive or achieve its ends within its own sphere of existence.

⁴⁴ A better translation might have been *support* in place of *strength*, but I do not find this meaning in the dictionaries for *bala*.

**Balaṁ cando, balaṁ sūro, balaṁ samaṇabrahmaṇā,
balaṁ velaṁ samuddassa, balaṁ ti balaṁ-itthiyā.**

The moon is powerful, the sun is powerful, ascetics and Brahmins are powerful, the shore of the ocean is powerful, the strength of women is powerful.

The moon and sun provide the power of light, time and natural order.

Ascetics and true Brahmins represent the power of morality, renunciation and spiritual knowledge which is the power to guide society toward righteousness. The shore is the power of the ocean, giving it definition, boundary and the strength of the tide. Finally, the strength of women is itself a formidable power, acknowledging the unique influence, resilience and capacity of women as a fundamental force in the world.

**Sapādānaṃ balī sīho, tato puḷuvako balī,
tato kippilikā, naro, rājā sabbesam-antato.**

The lion is strong amongst those with paws, a worm is stronger than that, an ant is stronger than that, a man is stronger than that, a king is stronger than all within the (kingdom's) limits.

The lion is strongest among pawed animals in its jungle. But a tiny worm is stronger in the sense that it can consume the lion's corpse, outlasting its physical power. The ant is stronger still due to its collective, relentless industry. A man is stronger than an ant, able to destroy its colonies. And a king is the strongest of all within his realm, as his command governs the lives of all men. Strength is thus contextual: it shifts from individual might, to the power of decay, to social organisation and finally to sovereign authority.

**Gatī migānaṃ pavanaṃ, ākāso pakkhinaṃ gatī,
virāgo gatī dhammānaṃ, Nibbānārahataṃ gatī.**

The destiny of animals is the forest, the destiny of birds is the sky, the destiny of phenomena is destruction, the destiny of the Arahāt is Nibbāna.

Animals are destined for the forest, their realm of survival. Birds are destined for the sky, their element of freedom. All conditioned phenomena have destruction as their inevitable destiny, such is the law of impermanence. In sublime contrast, the destiny of the Arahāt, the perfected one, is Nibbāna: the unconditioned, the deathless, the final liberation that is the cessation of all suffering. This verse ascends from physical habitats to the ultimate spiritual goal, framing Nibbāna as the true and final destination.

13. Itthī
A Woman⁴⁵
(17 Verses)

156 [adm.]

**Vāreyya kulajaṃ pañño virūpam-api kaññakaṃ;
hīnāya pi surūpāya vivāhaṃ sadisaṃ kare.**

A wise man should marry a maiden born in a good family,
even if plain; (but) he can even make a beautiful inferior an
equal in marriage.

A wise man is advised to choose a wife from a good family, as her upbringing will likely have instilled moral conduct, diligence and social compatibility. Even if she lacks conventional beauty, her noble character will ensure a harmonious and prosperous household. Conversely, a wise man can, through his own conduct and guidance, elevate a woman of striking beauty but low character or base origins, making her an equal in the partnership through shared values and respect.

⁴⁵ This chapter might have been better split into two (along the lines of *dujjano* and *sujano*), the first half until vs. 164 is more positive about women and their status; but 165 to 172 identifies characteristics that are presented as belonging to all women, which seems to me to overgeneralise, as they may apply only to some. Other verses about women, both positive and negative, are found at 153, 200, 243, 244, 259, 356 and 378.

**Sāmā migakkhī sukesī, tanumajjhimadantavā,
dassanīyā mukhavaṇṇā, gambhīranābhi vācakā,
susīlā vāyamati ca, hīnakule pi vivāhaye.**

He should marry one of brown complexion, with deer-like eyes, who has a slim waist, has even teeth, beautiful facial features, deep navel, who speaks well, is virtuous and energetic, even if from an inferior family.

The ideal physical and personal attributes of a suitable bride includes traits like a slim waist, even teeth and a deep navel, reflecting traditional aesthetic standards. More importantly, it emphasises desirable personal qualities: virtuous conduct, energetic diligence and eloquent speech. A man should marry a woman possessing these traits even if she comes from a low-status family. Her inherent character and personal merits outweigh the social disadvantage of a humble birth, placing the emphasis on the individual's personal qualities.

158–159 [sim., stm.]

**Bhutto mātā va bhojesi, saraṇesu ca dhātiyo;
kammesu sakapanti ca, katakammesu dhāti naṃ;
dhammesu paṭiṭṭhā niccaṃ, sayanesu ca vaṇṇibhā,
kulesu bhātaraṃ vācī, yā nārī seṭṭhasammatā.**

Like nurses amongst the refugees, like a nourishing mother, she feeds him; she is compassionate in work, she is a guardian of the work done; that woman who is constantly established in her duties, like a beautiful servant in the residences, who speaks as a relative amongst the families, is considered excellent.

She is like a nurse in times of trouble, a nourishing mother who feeds and cares for the household, and a diligent guardian who manages work and preserves what has been accomplished. She is steadfast in her duties, serves gracefully in the home, and acts as a diplomatic relative who fosters good relations with other families. This ideal combines the roles of caretaker, manager, steward and ambassador. The woman who embodies this blend of practical skill, unwavering duty and social intelligence is rightly considered supreme.

**Yo nam̐ bharati sabbadā niccaṃ ātāpi ussuko
sabbakāmaharaṃ posaṃ bhattāraṃ nātimaññati.**

She does not despise the husband who always supports her,
who is constantly ardent and eager, who brings her all
pleasures and nourishes her.

She should never despise or look down upon a husband who fulfills his role: one who consistently supports the family, is ardent and eager in his efforts, and provides both material necessities and pleasures. Ingratitude towards such a husband is presented as a serious fault. The verse underscores the value of reciprocity and respect within the marital partnership. Recognising and honouring the husband's dedicated provision is the wife's corresponding duty, ensuring mutual appreciation and domestic harmony.

**Na cāpi svatthi bhattāraṃ icchācārena rosaye,
bhattu ca garuno sabbe paṭipūjeti paṇḍitā.**

**A good woman ought not to anger her husband through
ambition, a wise woman must honour all her husband's
teachers.**

A wise wife should not anger her husband through self-serving ambition or willful behavior that disrupts household peace. Furthermore, she must extend honour and service not only to her husband but also to all his teachers and elders. This shows an understanding that her respect for him includes respect for the sources of his knowledge and virtue. It frames a good marriage as integrated into a broader web of social and spiritual relationships, respecting the hierarchy of mentorship that guides him.

**Uṭṭhāhikā analasā, saṅgahitaparijjanā,
bhattu manāpaṃ carati, sambhatam-anurakkhati.
Evaṃ vattati yā nārī, bhattu chandavasānugā,
Manāpā nāma te Devā, yattha sā upapajjati.**

Energetic, not lazy, treating the servants well, she lives pleasantly with her husband, she protects their wealth. That woman who lives like this, according to her husband's desire, is reborn amongst the Devas called Agreeable.

She is energetic and industrious, never lazy. She treats the servants and household staff with kindness and skill, maintaining harmony. She lives pleasantly with her husband, fostering affection and companionship.

She is also a careful steward, protecting the wealth they have accumulated together. Because she lives according to her husband's righteous wishes, she is reborn among a class of deities fittingly named The Agreeable. Her harmonious nature, cultivated in the domestic sphere, finds its culmination in a celestial realm of perfect concord.

**Itthiy' ekacciyā vā pi seyyā vuttā va Muninā:
bhaṇḍānaṃ uttamaṃ itthī, agg' upaṭṭhāyikā ti pi.**

Even a few women were spoken well of by the Sage (saying):
women are the best of valuables, they are the best of
attendants.

The praise is specific and high, such women are declared the best of valuables, meaning they are the most precious possession a household can have, more valuable than any material treasure. Furthermore, they are called the best attendants, signifying their unparalleled capacity for devoted, skilful, and beneficial service to their husband and family.

There are exceptional women whose virtue, loyalty, and capability make them supreme blessings. The text therefore extols the women who embody the highest feminine virtues.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ So far the chapter has been discussing worthy and useful women, and their good qualities; from the next verse until the end of the chapter it outlines some unwanted characteristics.

**Mātarā dhītarā vā pi bhaginiyā vicakkhaṇo
na vivittāsane mante, nārī māyāvinī nanu?**

*A discerning man should not talk with a mother, a daughter or
even a sister on a secluded seat, is not a woman deceitful?*

A discerning man is warned not to hold private conversations with even his mother, daughter or sister in a secluded, private place. The rhetorical question implies an underlying distrust of feminine nature, suggesting that passion or trickery could arise even in ostensibly safe relationships. This reflects a traditional emphasis on avoiding any situation that could lead to sensual temptation or scandal, advocating for strict boundaries to protect moral integrity.

**Vijjutānañ-ca lolattaṃ satthānañ-cātikkhattaṃ
siṅghataṃ vāyutejānaṃ anukubbanti nāriyo.**

Women are as restless as lightning, as sharp as swords, as swift
as wind and fire.

Women are said to be as restless and unpredictable as lightning, as sharp
and cutting as swords, and as swift and consuming as wind and fire.

This imagery conveys a sense of volatility, potential harm and
overwhelming speed. It characterises women as powerful forces that are
difficult to control or predict, capable of sudden, transformative and
potentially destructive action. The verse serves as a warning to be
mindful of this inherent power and volatility.

**Diguṇo thīnam-āhāro, buddhi cāpi catugguṇā,
chagguṇo hoti vāyāmo, kāmo tv-aṭṭhaguṇo bhava.**

A woman's support is twofold, her intelligence fourfold, her effort sixfold, but her sexual desire is eightfold.

A woman's consumption or physical sustenance is double, her intelligence is quadruple, her effort is sixfold, but her sexual desire is eightfold. This is not literal but a symbolic way of saying that a woman's passions, cunning, persistence and drives are vastly multiplied. It portrays feminine energy as immensely powerful and multi-faceted, with a particularly overwhelming emphasis on sensual desire, suggesting this is a primary and potent motivating force.

**Ekam-ekāya itthiyā aṭṭha-aṭṭhapatino siyum,
sūrā ca balavanto ca, sabbakāmarasāharā,
kareyya navame chandaṃ, ūnattā hi na pūrati.**

For a woman may have eight husbands, one by one, heroes and strong, bringing the essence of all desires, (but still) she may have desire for a ninth, for she does not feel fulfilled.

Even if a woman had eight husbands sequentially and each one is a hero, a strong provider of all pleasures, she might still crave a ninth. The reason given is that she does not feel fulfilled. This speaks to a traditional view of female sensuality as boundless and incapable of being satisfied by any finite number of partners or any amount of sensory gratification. It is a cautionary trope about the perceived depth and unquenchable nature of desire in women.

**Vivādasīlī ussuyā, passantataṇhikāgatā,
amitābhūñjananiddā satam̐ puttā pi tam̐ jahe.**

Even a hundred children should abandon one quarrelsome,
envious, staring cravenly, sleeping and eating without
measure.

This list the traits that make a woman so reprehensible that even her own children should abandon her. These include being quarrelsome, envious, staring with craving or covetousness, and being immoderate in eating and sleeping which are signs of gluttony and laziness. Such a woman fails in the fundamental virtues of a mother and homemaker: peace, generosity, modesty and self-control. The hyperbolic image of a hundred sons leaving her underscores that these flaws destroy even the most sacred biological bond, rendering her unfit for family life.

**Lapanti saddhim-aññena, passantaññaṃ savibbhamā,
cittakaṃ cintayant' aññaṃ, nārīnaṃ nāma ko piyo?**

They chat with one, while glancing wantonly at another, and thinking in their heart of (yet) another, who is dear to women?

A woman chatting with one man, while her eyes wander lustfully toward another, and her heart and thoughts are secretly fixed on a third. For this type of woman no single person truly holds her loyalty or love; their attention and desire are perpetually divided and shifting.

This characterises feminine affection as sometimes superficial, opportunistic, and unstable, incapable of deep, singular, and steadfast attachment. This is indeed something that may be true for some women, but not, of course, for all.

**Gaṇheyya vātaṃ jālena, sāgaram-ekapāṇinā
osiñceyya ca; tālena sakena janaye ravaṃ;
pamadāsu visajjeyya itthiyesā va dhammatā.**

One might catch the wind with a net, one might sprinkle the
(whole) ocean with one hand; one might produce a sound with
the palm of one hand; (still) she will speak amongst the
women, this is the nature of women.

The gossipy and indiscreet nature of women is as immutable and
inevitable as natural law. One would have an easier time catching the
wind in a net, sprinkling the entire ocean with one hand, or producing a
sound by clapping with one hand, than preventing a woman from
speaking with other women. A woman's tendency to share secrets and
engage in talk is presented as an irresistible compulsion to
communicate, often without discretion.

**Jivhā saḥassiko yo hi jīve vassasataṃ naro,
tena nikammunā vutto, thīdoso kiṃ khayāṃ gato?**

A man having a thousand tongues might live for a hundred years, having spoken with great effort, (but) could the faults of women be destroyed?

This verse ends the chapter with a rhetorical question emphasising the futility of trying to fully enumerate or eradicate the faults of women. It suggests that even if a man had a thousand tongues and lived for a hundred years, speaking incessantly and with great effort, he could not exhaust the subject of women's flaws, nor would his discourse destroy those faults. As with the other verses at the end of this chapter, this one should be taken as applying to some, but not to all. Both men and women obviously have flaws depending on their character. We should not over-generalise.

14. Putto The Child (7 Verses)

173–174 [stm.]

**Pañca ṭhānāni sampassam puttam-icchanti paṇḍitā:
bhato vā no bharissati, kiccaṃ vā no karissati,
kulavaṃso ciraṃ tiṭṭhe, dāyajjaṃ paṭipajjati,
atha vā pana petānaṃ dakkhiṇānuppadassati.**

Considering these five reasons the wise wish for a child,
(thinking): Supported, he will support us, he will do his duties
for us, the family lineage will stand for a long time, he will
manage the inheritance, and then he will make offerings to the
dead.

First, parents hope the child will support them in old age, reversing the caregiving relationship. Second, the child will perform necessary familial and social duties. Third, the child ensures the continuity of the family lineage, preserving its name and heritage. Fourth, the child will responsibly manage and pass on the family inheritance. Finally, and most significantly, the child will make merit through offerings in the parents' name after their death, providing them with spiritual sustenance in the afterlife.

**Atijātam-anujātaṃ puttam-icchanti paṇḍitā,
avajātaṃ na icchanti, yo hoti kulachinnako.**

The wise wish for a child who is better or (at least) equal, they
do not wish for one inferior, one who breaks up the family.

Wise parents do not simply wish for just any child; they desire a child who is either equal to them in virtue and accomplishment, or, ideally, superior, one who will elevate the family's standing, especially in the Dhamma. They fear a child who is inferior, one whose bad conduct brings shame, dissipates wealth, or abandons tradition, thus breaking up the family in both a social and moral sense. Such a child severs the lineage not just physically but morally, destroying its reputation and spiritual potential.

**Ekūdarasamuppannā, na bhavanti samassamā,
nānā vaṇṇā, nānā carā, yathā badarakaṇḍakā.**

Though arising in the same womb, they are not the same, they
are of various kinds, various conduct, like the thorns of a
jujube.

Siblings born from the same parents can possess radically different natures, characters, and behaviors. They are not uniform or equal in quality. The thorns on a jujube tree, although growing from the same source, vary in size, shape, and sharpness. This natural variation explains why, despite similar upbringing, one child may become virtuous while another becomes wayward. It acknowledges the role of individual tendencies based on previous lives' deeds that each child brings with him, which then interact with parental guidance.

**Adame bahavo dosā, dame tu bahavo guṇā,
tasmā puttañ-ca sissañ-ca damakāle va dammaye.**

**In the undisciplined are many faults, but in the disciplined are
many virtues, therefore a child and a pupil should be
disciplined at a time for discipline.**

An undisciplined person is a collection of faults, they are unrestrained, impulsive, and prone to error. A disciplined person, in contrast, cultivates many virtues: patience, respect, self-control, and diligence. Therefore, the crucial duty of a parent or teacher is to apply discipline at the appropriate time for discipline, meaning especially in youth when character is malleable, and at the moment when a correction can be effectively learned. Timely discipline is the transformative act that turns the raw potential of a child into a virtuous adult.

**Ovādeyyānusāseyya, asabbhā ca nivāraye,
danto hi so piyo hoti, adanto hoti appiyo.⁴⁷**

One should both advise and instruct, and forbid what is vile,
one is loved by the disciplined, but one is not loved by the
undisciplined.

One must first advise and instruct, providing positive direction and teaching. Second, one must forbid what is vile, clearly setting boundaries against unwholesome behavior. The result of this balanced approach is that the disciplined person comes to love and respect the disciplinarian, recognising the care behind the correction. Conversely, the undisciplined person, left to their own destructive habits, grows to resent or feel unloved by those who failed to guide them properly. True care therefore involves both encouragement and restraint.

⁴⁷ Dhp reads: *satam hi so piyo hoti, asatam hoti appiyo*; one is loved by the good, but one is not loved by the bad.

**Puttaṃ vā bhātaraṃ duṭṭhaṃ, anusāseyya no jahe,
kiṃ nu chejjaṃ hatthapādaṃ, littāṃ asucinā siyā?**

One should instruct, not abandon, a corrupt child or brother,
why would one cut off hands and feet when they are soiled
with filth?

One should never abandon a wayward child or brother; the duty is to continually instruct and attempt to reform them. If your own hand or foot became soiled with filth, you would not immediately cut it off. You would wash it repeatedly until it was clean. Similarly, a soiled relative, though corrupted by bad conduct, remains related to you. The response should be patient, persistent cleansing through moral instruction, not amputation or abandonment. Family bonds demand unwavering efforts at rehabilitation.

15. Dāso The Slave (2 Verses)

180 [stm.]

**Antojāto dhanakkīto, dāsabyopagato sayam,
dāsakaramarānīto, iccevaṃ catudhā siyuṃ.**

There are these four types (of slaves): one born in the home,
one bought with wealth, one who has himself entered into
slavery, a slave captured in war.

This verse lists four ways a person becomes a slave: first, by being born into servitude; second, by being purchased like a commodity; third, by voluntarily entering slavery, due to debt, destitution, or seeking protection; fourth, by being captured as a prisoner of war. What is absent is the category of individuals systematically captured and trafficked solely for commercial exploitation, the defining feature of the modern, plantation-based slave trade. The verse thus captures the paradigms of its era, where slavery was often integrated into existing social, penal or military frameworks.

**Dāsā pañceva corayyasakhañātattasādisā,
tathā viññūhi viññeyyā mittā dārā ca bandhavā.**

Slaves are of five (types): the same as thieves, masters, friends, relatives and oneself, so they should be understood by the wise, by a friend, by a wife and by a brother.

A slave can be like a thief, stealing from the household or shirking duties. They can be like a master, wielding undue influence or acting arrogantly. They can be a genuine friend, loyal and trustworthy. They can be like a relative, integrated with familial affection. Finally, they can be like oneself, meaning their interests are so aligned with the master's that they act with the care of the owner. These types should be understood not only by the wise but also by key household figures as the slave's behavior impacts the entire domestic sphere.

16. Gharāvāso The Householder (14 Verses)

182 [stm.]

**Duṭṭhadārena amityā dāso c' uttaravācako
sasappe ca ghare vāso maccu-m-eva, na saṁsayo.**

Dwelling with a corrupt wife, an enemy or a servant who talks
back, or in a house that has snakes is deadly, no doubt.

A corrupt wife creates discord and moral danger. An enemy within the home poses a constant threat. Servants who talk back signify a breakdown of order and respect. The presence of snakes represents a literal, hidden danger. Together, these elements create an environment of toxicity, treachery, insecurity, and peril. A household must be purified of these destructive forces to be a place of safety and peace; otherwise, it is not a home but a tomb.

**Yasaṃ lābhaṃ patthayantaṃ naraṃ vajjanti dūrato,
tasmā anapekkhitvāna taṃ maggaṃ maggaye budho.**

*They avoid from afar the person seeking fame and gain,
therefore the wise one, without longing, should walk the path.*

A person who is visibly and eagerly seeking personal fame and gain will be avoided by the discerning. Their ambition radiates neediness and self-interest, making others wary of exploitation or superficiality. Therefore, the wise person, understanding this dynamic, should walk the spiritual path without such longing. Their practice should be motivated by higher aims like virtue and understanding, not worldly acclaim. This ensures their company remains pure and their progress genuine, attracting the right kind of respect.

**Khalaṃ sālaṃ pasuṃ khattaṃ gantā cassa abhikkhaṇaṃ,
mitaṃ dhaññaṃ nidhāpeyya, mitañ-ca pācaye ghare.**

Going frequently to his fields, animals, stables and granaries,
one should store a measure of grain, and cook a measure in the
house.⁴⁸

The head of the household should be personally and frequently involved in inspecting his core assets: fields, livestock, storehouses and granaries. This hands-on oversight prevents neglect and theft. The key principle is measured management whereby one should store a measured portion of grain for future security while using another measured portion for current consumption in the home. This balance between saving for tomorrow and providing for today embodies the virtue of wise stewardship.

⁴⁸ This verse is repeated below at Dhn 316, but in the context of being a courtier, rather than simply a householder.

185 [ana., adm.]

**Añjanānaṃ khayam̐ disvā, vammikānañ-ca sañcayam̐,
madhūnañ-ca samāhāram̐, paṇḍito gharam-āvase.**

Having seen the wearing off of collyrium, the piling up of anthills, and the gathering of honey, a wise one should live in a house.

Collyrium slowly wears away with use, showing that resources deplete. Anthills grow by gradual accumulation, showing how savings can be built. Bees gather honey from many flowers, showing how wealth can be assembled from diverse small efforts. A wise person, seeing these facts of nature, understands the need for principles in a householder's life: to diligently replenish what is consumed, to patiently accumulate savings, and to actively gather resources. The house is the place where this intelligent management must be practiced.

**Sayaṃ āyaṃ vayaṃ jaññā, sayaṃ jaññā katākatam,
niggaṇhe niggaṇhārahaṃ, paggaṇhe paggaṇhārahaṃ.**

One should know one's health and decline, one should know what is done and not done, one should censure those worthy of censure, and raise up those worthy of being raised up.

First, one must know one's own state of increase and decrease, in health, wealth, and influence. Second, one must discern what actions should be done and what should be avoided. Third, one must have the courage to censure those who deserve it, such as lazy servants or wayward children. Fourth, one must support and elevate those who are worthy of encouragement. This balanced application of introspection, judgment, discipline, and nurture is the mark of a capable master of any domain.

**Ekayāmo narādhippo, dviyāmo paṇḍīto naro,
tayāmo ca gharāvāso, catuyāmo ca duggato.⁴⁹**

A king (sleeps) for one watch, a wise man for two watches, a householder for three watches, a poor man for four watches.

A king sleeps for only one watch. His kingdom's security demands constant vigilance; longer sleep invites conspiracy and ruin. A wise man sleeps two watches, balancing rest with the need for study, meditation and self-cultivation. A householder responsible for family and livelihood sleeps for three watches, needing more rest for physical labor while still rising early for duties. The poor man, having no wealth to protect and no responsibilities to fulfill, sleeps for four watches or for the whole night. The verse is not prescriptive but descriptive: one's station determines how much wakefulness is required for survival and success. Sleep, like all things, must be appropriate to one's place in life.

⁴⁹ The time nominatives in this verse are acting adverbially, with an implied verb (*bhavati*). The accusatives and the expressed verb in the parallel make the sense clearer.

**So bandhu yo hite yutto, so pitā yo ca posako,
tañ mittañ yattha vissāso, sā bhar'yā yattha nibbuti.**

The relative is one who is devoted to your welfare, the father is one who nourishes, the friend is one where you place trust, the wife is one where you find peace.

A true relative is one actively devoted to your welfare. A true father is one who provides nourishment and support. A true friend is one in whom you can place complete trust. A true wife is one in whose presence you find genuine peace. This shifts the emphasis from formal relationships to the substantive emotional and moral support they provide. The ideal household is built with individuals who fulfill these roles effectively, regardless of nominal labels.

**Saddhā pemesu santesu na gaṇe māsakaṃ satam;
saddhā peme asantesu māsakaṃ pi satam gaṇe.**

Amongst those with faith and love one must not count a hundred as a penny; (but) amongst those without faith and love one must count even a penny as a hundred.

When dealing with trustworthy individuals who possess faith and genuine goodwill, you should not obsess over exact accounting. A substantial debt can be treated lightly, as their integrity is the real guarantee. However, when dealing with those lacking integrity and care, you must adopt more caution. Their moral deficiency makes every penny a risk. True wisdom in worldly dealings lies in calibrating your vigilance to the trustworthiness of the other person, not to the numerical value of the exchange.

**Yācako appiyo hoti, yācam̐ adadam-appiyo,
tasmā seṭṭhanaro loke dhanam̐ sippam̐ pariggahe.**

A beggar is disliked, one who doesn't give when begged from is disliked, therefore the best man in the world should acquire wealth and skill.

A person who is always begging becomes disliked for their dependency. Conversely, a person who refuses legitimate requests becomes disliked for their stinginess. The solution presented is for the best man to avoid both pitfalls by proactively acquiring two things: wealth and a skill. Wealth allows one to be generous without impoverishment, and a skill ensures one is not forced into the position of a beggar. Self-reliance through legitimate means is the path to maintaining dignity and the ability to be charitable.

**Sabbadā pi dhanam rakkhe, dāram rakkhe dhanam pi ca;
dāram dhanañ-ca attānam rakkhā yeva sadā bhava.**

One should guard one's wealth in every way, one should guard
a wife as well as wealth; wife, wealth and oneself should
always be guarded.

Wealth must be guarded from loss and theft. A wife must be guarded for her well-being, fidelity, and the harmony of the home, and this protection may require the use of wealth itself. Finally, one must guard oneself, one's health, reputation, and virtue, from all dangers. The verse implies these three are interconnected: the loss of one jeopardises the others. A guarded self can acquire and guard wealth; that wealth helps guard the wife and home; a secure home supports the self. It is a doctrine of domestic and personal security.

192–193 [adm.]

**Na sādharmaṇadār' assa, na bhuñje sādum ekako,
na seve lokāyatikaṃ, netam paññāya vaḍḍhanaṃ.
Sīlavā vattasampanno, appamatto vicakkaṇo,
nivātavutti atthaddho, sūrato sakhilo mudu.**

One should not share one's wife, one should not eat delicious food alone, one should not practice materialism, this does not increase wisdom. One should be virtuous, customary, heedful, discerning, modest, pliant, courageous, kindly and gentle.

Sharing one's wife violates marital trust and creates chaos. Eating food alone fosters selfishness and severs the bonds of generosity. Associating with materialism turns the mind from truth. These actions are not neutral: they actively stunt spiritual growth. A person should embody a comprehensive set of virtues which is not an abstract ideal but a practical description of character forged by right living. It teaches that wisdom is cultivated not only through what one pursues but also through what one consciously avoids.

**Saṅgahe tāva mittānaṃ saṃvibhāgī vidhānavā,
tappeyya annapānena sadā samaṇabrahmaṇe.**

**In support of his friends he is supportive and skilful, let him
always satisfy ascetics and Brahmins with food and drink.**

First, he should be skillful and supportive of his friends, fostering strong, reciprocal bonds. Second he should always satisfy ascetics and Brahmins, representatives of the spiritual life, with food and drink. This regular giving to the virtuous is a primary source of merit, purifies wealth, and ensures the spiritual blessings and guidance of the noble ones. The household is thus a platform for sustaining both social networks and the spiritual community.

**Dhammakāmo sutādhāro, bhaveyya paripucchako,
sakkaccaṃ payirūpāse sīlavante bahussute.**

Loving the Dhamma, learned, let him be one who questions,
let him respectfully associate with the virtuous and learned.

The householder should be one who loves the Dhamma, finding joy in it. He should be learned, bearing the teachings he has learned through listening. He should be an active inquirer, seeking clarification of difficult points to deepen understanding. Most importantly, he should respectfully associate with and attend upon those who are virtuous and learned. This active, humble engagement with both the teachings and their living embodiments ensures his continued growth in wisdom while still living a household life.

17. Kato
Done (by the Wise)⁵⁰
(32 Verses)

196 [stm.]

**Pubbasiro 'si medhāvī, dīghāyu dakkhiṇaṃ siro,
 pacchimo cittasanto 'si, maraṇaṃ uttaro bhava.**

(Sleeping) with head to the east one will have wisdom, with
 head to the south one will have long life, with head to the west
 one will have a peaceful mind, (but) with head to the north
 one might die.

Sleeping with the head to the east is said to promote wisdom, aligning with the rising sun and new understanding. The south is associated with long life and is linked to the domain of Yama, the god of death, implying a respectful alignment that averts his claim. The west, the direction of sunset, leads to a peaceful, settled mind. The north, however, is warned against as potentially leading to death, as one should not disrespectfully point one's feet at Yama.

⁵⁰ Looking at the contents of this and the following chapter, it seems *Kata* and *Akata* are being used as imperatives or optatives, meaning not: What Has Been Done, so much as: What One Should Do, or Not Do, in this case we might have expected *Kātabba* and *Akātabba* as the titles are given in the *mātika* to *Kavidappaṇānīti*. If we keep *Kata/Akata*, then perhaps we should understand *Kata* as short for *Paṇḍitakata* (Done By the Wise), and *Akata* likewise as what the wise avoid.

**Āyumā pācīnaṃ mūkhaṃ, dhanavā dakkhiṇaṃ bhava,
pacchimaṃ yasassī bhuñje, no bhuñje uttaraṃ mukhaṃ,**

One should eat facing the east for long life, to the south for
wealth, to the west for fame, (but) one should not eat facing
the north.

Facing east while eating is believed to promote longevity, again connecting to the sun's life-giving rise. Facing south invites wealth, as the departed relatives, whose blessings are needed for prosperity, are in that direction. Facing west brings fame, the lasting renown that follows one like the setting sun. The strong prohibition against facing north reinforces it as an inauspicious direction for vital activities, seen as draining or harmful. These practices emphasise mindful posture, suggesting that even daily routines should be performed with intentional alignment.

**Bhutvā nisīdanam thūlam, tiṭṭhanto balavaḍḍhano,
āyumā caṅkamo siyā, dhāvanto rogavajjito.**

After eating, sitting makes one stout, standing increases strength, walking increases life, jogging avoids disease.

There is a gradient of activity: remaining seated leads to becoming stout or gaining weight; standing increases physical strength; walking promotes long life; and jogging wards off disease. This reflects an good understanding of metabolism and digestion: greater post-meal activity correlates with better health outcomes. The advice moves from passive to highly active, recommending engagement over lethargy. It champions bodily vigor as a foundation for a successful life.

**Yo ca sītañ-ca uṇhañ-ca tiṇā bhiyyo na maññati,
karaṁ purisakiccāni, so sukhā na vihāyati.**

The one who considers cold and heat as no more than grass,
while doing his personal duties, does not fall away from
happiness.

The person who considers extremes of cold and heat as insignificant as grass possesses equanimity; they are not distressed by external conditions that disturb ordinary people. More importantly, this steadiness is coupled with diligence in performing one's personal duties.

The combination of inner indifference to discomfort and outer commitment to responsibility ensures that such a person does not fall away from happiness. Their joy is internal and stable, rooted in virtue and duty, not subject to the changing weather of circumstance.

**Visamhāmatam-ādeyya, asuddhamhā pi kañcanam,
nīcamhā py-uttamā vijjam, ratanathī pi dukkulā.**

One should take nectar even from poison, gold even from what is impure, learning even from a low-born, a jewel of a woman even from a poor family.

One should draw the nectar of wisdom even from a poisonous or hostile source. One should extract pure gold even from impure ore. One should acquire true learning even from a teacher of low social standing. One should recognise a jewel of a wife even if she comes from a poor family. The essence is valued over its container. This is an instruction against prejudice and for clear-eyed evaluation: true worth often lies hidden within unattractive exteriors.

**Guyham-attham-asambuddham sambodhayati yo naro,
mantabhedabhayā tassa dāsabhūto titikkhati.**

That person who knows a secret matter that should not be known, one bears with him like a slave, out of fear of betrayal.

This verse warns of the dangerous power held by someone who discovers your secret failings or hidden vulnerabilities. Such a person, having awakened to a matter that should remain concealed, gains a form of power over you. You become like a slave in their presence as they know your innermost secrets, so you are forced to bear with them, to tolerate their presence or even their insolence as a slave has to. This highlights the peril of having shameful secrets and the vulnerability it creates, making one subject to potential blackmail.

**Aññātavāsaṃ vasato, jātavedasamena pi,
khamitabbaṃ sapaññaṇa api dāsassa tajjitaṃ.**

Even a slave's threat is to be forgiven by one with wisdom,
who is living unknown, even if he is of fiery temperament.

If one is living discreetly or in a foreign place, maintaining peace is paramount. Therefore, even if a slave or another person of low status becomes threatening or hostile, a wise person should forgive and endure it. The rationale is pragmatic: reacting to such a provocation could disrupt one's peace, draw unwanted attention or escalate a trivial matter. Wisdom here is the restraint of pride for the sake of larger objectives like safety and anonymity.

**Dhanadhaññapayogesu—tathā vijjāgamesu ca—
dūte ca byavahāresu, cattalajjo sadā bhava.**

Regarding wealth, grain and business—and likewise in regard to knowledge and traditions—in messaging and in commerce, one should always abandon shame.

In matters of wealth, grain, business, acquiring knowledge, learning traditions, sending messages, and conducting commerce, one must be direct, assertive, and clear. Hesitation out of false shame can lead to poor deals, misunderstood terms or missed opportunities. Both business and scholarship require a certain boldness regarding negotiation, inquiry and transaction. This is a call for the practical resolution needed to manage worldly affairs effectively.

220 –Done (by the Wise)

204 [adm.]

**Na hi koci kate kicce kattāraṃ samapekkhate,
tasmā sabbāni kammāni sāvasesāni kāraye.**

**No one looks for the maker when a task has been done,
therefore in all works one should leave a remainder.**

When a task is fully and perfectly completed, people simply enjoy the result and no longer think about who accomplished it. Therefore, one should always leave a task slightly unfinished. This ensures that your involvement remains necessary, and you are continually sought after to complete the work. It is a strategy for job security and maintaining leverage, advising against making oneself fully expendable by delivering a perfectly closed product.

221 –Done (by the Wise)

205 [adm.]

**Upakāraṁ hi teneva sattunā sattum-uddhare,
pādalaggam̐ karaṭṭhena kaṇḍakeneva kaṇḍakam̐.**

One should remove an enemy with the help of an enemy, one should remove a thorn stuck in the foot with a thorn held in the hand.

One should remove an enemy by leveraging the help of another enemy, setting them against each other. The simile is direct and practical: a thorn stuck in the foot is best removed using another thorn held in the hand. This is a lesson in strategic pragmatism, not ethics. It acknowledges that in conflicts, one must sometimes use harsh or unsavory means to achieve a necessary end, turning the nature of the problem into its own solution.

**Name namantassa, bhaje bhajantaṃ,
kiccānikubbassa kareyya kiccaṃ,
nānatthakāmassa kareyya atthaṃ,
asambhajantaṃ pi na sambhajeyya.**

Reverence to the reverent, follow the one who follows you,
she should do her duty to the one doing his duty, but she need
not do good to the one who wishes her harm, no one needs to
love those who do not have love in return.

Offer reverence to those who are themselves reverent. Associate with
those who associate with you. Perform your duties for those who are
dutiful toward you. However, do not feel obligated to act for the benefit
of someone who wishes you harm. The final line generalises the
principle: there is no need to associate with those who do not
reciprocate association. This is not a call to selfishness, but to wise
investment of one's social and moral energy. Relationships should be
mutual; one-sided efforts are futile.

223 –Done (by the Wise)

207 [ana., adm.]

**Caje cajantaṃ sinehaṃ na kiriyā,
apetacittena na sambhajeyya.
Dijo va dumaṃ khīṇaphalaṃ ñatvā,
aññaṃ apekkheyya mahā hi loko.**

Abandon the one who abandons, not having desire, she need not love the one who is devoid of thought for her. A bird, knowing that a tree is devoid of fruit, can look for another tree in this great wide world.

If someone abandons you, you should in turn abandon them, without clinging or sentimental desire. Do not maintain affection for someone who no longer has any thought for you. A bird, realising a tree is barren of fruit, wisely flies to seek another. The world is vast, and opportunities for fruitful connection are plentiful. This teaches the wisdom of non-attachment to unproductive relationships and the courage to seek new grounds for growth when the current one is exhausted.

**Caje ekaṃ kulassatthaṃ, gāmassatthaṃ kulaṃ caje,
gāmaṃ janapadassatthaṃ, attatthaṃ pathaviṃ caje.**

One should abandon one person for the sake of the family, one should abandon the family for the sake of the village, one should abandon the village for the sake of the country, one should abandon the earth for one's own sake.

One should sacrifice a single individual for the welfare of the entire family. One should sacrifice a family for the survival of the village. One should sacrifice a village for the security of the entire country. Ultimately, one should be willing to sacrifice the whole world for one's own true welfare, meaning one's spiritual liberation. This calculus is about the scale of responsibility. It justifies difficult choices for the greater good, culminating in the supreme value of one's own ultimate spiritual goal over all worldly attachments.

**Dhanañ caje aṅgavarassa hetu,
aṅgañ caje jīvitāñ rakkhamāno—
dhanāñ aṅgañ jīvitāñ-cāpi—sabbañ
caje, naro Dhammam-anussaranto.**

One should abandon wealth for the sake of a limb, one should
abandon a limb protecting life (itself), one should abandon
all—wealth, limbs and life—for a person who recollects the
Dhamma.

One should be willing to sacrifice material wealth to preserve a limb.
One should sacrifice a limb to preserve life itself. However, for the sake
of the Dhamma, the truth and path to liberation, one should be prepared
to sacrifice all three: wealth, limbs, and even physical life. The
Dhamma is of greater value than mere biological existence. This echoes
the highest ideal of the Buddhist path, where the preservation of one's
commitment to truth and virtue is paramount, even at the cost of
everything worldly.

**Ahā gacchanti hāyantā, sattānam-ihā jīvitaṃ,
tasmā hi mā pamattattaṃ, gacchantu Jinasāsane.**

The lives of beings pass and are dwindling away here by the day, therefore do not be heedless, you must go to the teaching of the Victor.

The lifespan of all beings is constantly passing away, dwindling toward death with each moment. Given this undeniable truth of impermanence, one must not be heedless. The only logical, urgent response is to go to or take refuge in the teaching of the Victorious Buddha. This is a call to action: understanding that time is short and death is certain, procrastination in spiritual practice is the greatest folly. The path must be undertaken now.

**Ete bhiyyo samāyanti, sandhi tesam̃ na jīrati,
yo adhipannaṃ sahati yo ca jānāti desanaṃ.**

They unite even more so, their bonds do not decay, he who understands (the purpose) of confession⁵¹ bears with the one who has done wrong.

When one person confesses a fault and the other understands the purpose of such confession which is forgiveness and repair, they can bear with the wrongdoer. This act brings them together even more so, and their bond is renewed rather than decaying. It teaches that relationships are fortified not by perfection, but by the humility to admit faults and the wisdom to forgive them, transforming a breach into an opportunity for deeper connection.

⁵¹ Explained by the Jātaka comm. as: *accayadesanaṃ*, confessing a fault.

**Aggi āpo itthī muḷho sappo rājakulāni ca—
payatanāpagantabbā, sajjū pāṇaharāni ti.**

Fire, water, a woman, a fool, a snake and royal families—you must strenuously avoid these, as they quickly carry off life.

Fire and water, though essential, are destructive if not respected. A woman, a fool, a snake and royal families are all grouped as hazards that can quickly carry off life. Each represents a source of potential ruin: passion, folly, venom, and political intrigue. The advice is to recognise their inherent peril and maintain a vigilant distance. Survival and peace depend on knowing what to approach and what to flee.

**Sattham sunicchitadhiyāpi hi cintanīyam,
sārādhito 'py-avanipo parisāṅkanīyo,
hatthaṅgatāpi yuvatī parirakkhanīyā—
satthāvanīpayuvatīsu kuto vasittam?**

Even a text that has been studied well and learned by heart must be pondered on, even the king who has been propitiated must (still) be doubted, even the young woman in one's hands must be guarded—for how is there mastery of the text, the king and young women?

Even a well-studied text must be continually pondered, as understanding deepens. Even a king who has been appeased must still be regarded with caution, as his favor can shift. Even a young wife in one's own home must be guarded, as loyalty cannot be taken for granted. The rhetorical question acknowledges that complete control or certainty over knowledge, power, or love is an illusion. The wise remain vigilant, reflective and never complacent.

**Ussāho ripuvā mittam; alassam mittavā ripu;
visam viyāmatam vijjā; pamādo ’matavā visam.**

Energy, though it appears an enemy, is a friend; laziness, though it appears a friend, is an enemy; knowledge, though it appears to be poison, is like nectar; heedlessness, though it appears to be nectar, is a poison.

True energy, even when demanding or challenging like a foe, is your ultimate ally because it accomplishes goals and builds character.

Laziness, comfortable and accommodating like a friend, is a treacherous enemy that erodes potential and invites failure. True knowledge, often bitter and difficult to acquire like poison, is the liberating nectar of wisdom. Conversely, heedlessness, the careless avoidance of duty that feels sweet and easy like nectar, is a deadly poison that destroys virtue and opportunity. True discernment sees beyond superficial appearances to the essence of things.

**Vahe amittaṃ khandhena yāva kāle anāgate,
tam-eva āgate kāle, bhinde kumbhaṃ va silāyaṃ.**

You should carry an enemy on your shoulder until some time
in the future, when the (right) time comes, you should break
him like a pot on a rock.

One should temporarily endure and even outwardly support a foe until the opportune moment arrives. This requires self-control and the suppression of immediate anger. However, when the right time comes, when one has the advantage or the enemy is vulnerable, one must act with complete and final force, destroying the threat as decisively as one would smash a clay pot against a rock. It is a teaching on the timing of conflict: endure when weak, and strike without hesitation when strong.

**Singinaṃ pañcahatthena, satena vāhanaṃ caje,
hatthīnan-tu sahasseṇa—desacāgena dujjanāṃ.**

Avoid a horned creature when at five cubits, a vehicle at one hundred, but elephants at a thousand—and a bad person by abandoning the district.

A dangerous horned animal, like a bull or a ram, should be avoided when it is at a short distance. A failing vehicle should be avoided when it is at a hundred cubits. A rogue elephant must be avoided when it is at a thousand cubits. However, for the most persistent and corrosive danger the required remedy is most drastic: you must abandon the entire district or region. True safety from a toxic individual requires complete geographic separation, as their influence cannot be outrun by mere distance; it requires a change of environment.

**Paccakkhe garavo saṁse; parokkhe mittabandhave
kammante ca dāsabhacce; puttadāre saṁse mate.**

One should praise the respectable to their face; friends and relatives, workers, servants and dependants in their absence; and one should praise children and wives (only) when dead.

Respectable elders or superiors should be praised directly to their face, as this affirms hierarchy and encourages their continued patronage. Praise for friends, relatives, workers, and servants, however, is most effective when spoken in their absence to others, as this builds their reputation and loyalty indirectly. Finally, children and wives should be praised primarily after their death, as posthumous praise avoids the dangers of vanity and is seen as sincere, free from flattery and serves to cement their legacy and the family's honour.

**Sane sippaṁ, sane dhanāṁ, sane pabbatam-āruhe,
sane kāmo ca kodho ca, ime pañca sane sane.**

Gradually there is a craft, gradually there is wealth, gradually ascend a mountain, gradually there is desire and anger,⁵² these five gradually, gradually.

A craft or skill must be learned step-by-step. Wealth should be accumulated slowly and steadily. A mountain is climbed one step at a time. Even powerful internal forces like desire and anger should be followed or engaged with gradually meaning one should not act on them impulsively but observe and understand their rise before responding. The repetition of gradually, gradually emphasises that success and self-mastery in any endeavor are the results of incremental, persistent effort, not sudden, forceful leaps.

⁵² Presumably meaning: they build up gradually.

**Sataṃ cakkhū sataṃ kaṇṇā nāyakassa suto sadā,
tathā pi andhabadhiro, esā nāyakadhammatā.**

A leader has a hundred eyes, a hundred ears, and is always well-informed, even so he is blind and deaf, this is the nature of leadership.

A king or leader may have a hundred eyes and ears, a vast network of spies, ministers, and informants, and may thus believe he is always well-informed. However, despite this apparatus, he remains essentially blind and deaf. This is the true nature of leadership: one can never know everything. Information is filtered, biased or incomplete; plots are concealed; the full reality is elusive. Therefore, a wise leader must govern with caution and humility, acutely aware of the possibility of gaps in his knowledge, never mistaking his intelligence network for omniscience.

**Bahūnam-appasārānaṃ sāmaggiyā ti dujjayo,
tiṇena vaṭṭate rajju, tena nāgo pi bajjhati.**

When the essentially weak are numerous and united they are hard to defeat, a rope is made with grass, (yet) an elephant is bound by it.

Many individuals who are insignificant on their own, when united in purpose, become extremely difficult to defeat. A single blade of grass by itself is weak, but many strands woven together form a rope strong enough to bind a mighty elephant. The teaching is for both the weak and the strong: the weak must unite to gain power, and the strong must never underestimate a collective, however insignificant its individual components may seem. Unity transforms quantity into a new quality of strength.

**Uppajjate sace kodho, āvajje kakacūpamaṃ,
uppajje ce rase taṇhā, puttamaṃsūpamaṃ sare.**

If anger arises, reflect on the simile of the saw, if craving for tastes arises, remember the simile of the child’s flesh.⁵³

When anger arises, one should reflect on the simile of the saw, remembering that it is better to be cut into pieces by a saw than that one should give in to anger. When craving for sensory pleasures arises, one should remember the simile of the child’s flesh: just as parents would not enjoy eating their own child’s flesh, one should see the repulsive aspect of sensual indulgence. These reflections are tools for regaining mindfulness instantly.

⁵³ SN 12.63: (His parents said): *yan-nūna mayam imam ekaputtakam piyam manāpam vadhivā vallūrañ-ca soṇḍikañ-ca karivā, puttamaṃsāni khātantā evam tam kantārāvesesam nitthareyyāma*; why don’t we kill our only child, so loved and cherished, and after making dried and peppered meat, by eating our son’s flesh, we could enter and cross over the desert.

**Dānaṃ sinehabhesajjaṃ, maccheraṃ dūsan’ osadhaṃ;
dānaṃ yasassibhesajjaṃ, maccheraṃ kapaṇ’ osadhaṃ.**

Giving is a recipe for affection, (but) miserliness is a corrupt person’s drug;⁵⁴ giving is a recipe for fame, (but) miserliness is a poor man’s drug.

Giving is a recipe or medicine that produces affection from others and brings fame. It is a wholesome cure for social isolation and obscurity. Conversely, miserliness is the preferred drug of a corrupt person, and of a poor man, as it feeds their greed, as it perpetuates his poverty-mindedness. Miserliness is a toxic addiction that corrupts character and ensures continued wretchedness, while generosity is the healthy treatment that nourishes social bonds and a good reputation.

⁵⁴ Both *bhessajja* and *osadha* literally mean: medicine, but context requires we separate the meanings.

**Dhanam-icche vaṇijjeyya, sippam icche bahussute,
puttam-icche nāri kaññe, rājāmaccaṃ icch' āgate.**

Wishing for wealth one should trade; wishing for a craft
(approach) the learned; wishing for a child (approach) a young
woman; wishing for (anything more), having approached,
(speak with) a king's minister.

This is a direct cause-and-effect logic: if you desire wealth, you must engage in trade. If you desire a skill or particular knowledge, you must associate with the learned. If you desire a child, you must have a wife. If you desire anything more you should approach a king's minister. Wishes alone are futile; each goal has a specific and practical path of action attached to it. This is a call for proactive effort and a rejection of passive yearning.

**Mahantaṃ vaṭṭarukkhādiṃ khuddabījaṃ bahupphalaṃ,
sakkiṃ katvā udikkheyya puññapāpaṃ karo naro.**

A great round tree and so on has a lot of fruit (however) small the seed, having witnessed this, a person should consider what making merit and demerit yield.

A great tree produces an abundance of fruit having grown from a single, tiny seed. Having witnessed this immense result from a small cause, a person should contemplate how their own actions are like seeds. A single good or bad deed can yield vast, far-reaching consequences over time, just as a small seed yields a large tree. This reflection is meant to instill carefulness and intention in all actions, understanding that even minor deeds can grow into significant future happiness or suffering.

**Garukātabbaposesu nīcavuttiṃ karoti yo,
nīcattaṃ so pahantvāna, uttamatthe patiṭṭhati.**

The one who has low behaviour towards people who should be respected, having abandoned that lowliness, must establish the highest good.

If a person behaves in a low, disrespectful manner toward those who are worthy of respect, they themselves sink to a low state. However, there is a path of repair: one must first abandon that very low or inferior thought. Having done so, one can then establish oneself in the highest good, meaning in virtue, respect and right livelihood. The fault is not permanent; it can be corrected through conscious abandonment of the wrong attitude and a commitment to proper conduct in the future.

**Uttamaṁ paṇipātena, sūraṁ bhedena yojaye,
hīnaṁ appapadānena, vikkamena samaṁ jaye.**

The highest person is bound by prostration, the hero by distinction, the lowly person is won over by a small gift, an equal is won over by effort.

To bind a person of the highest status and virtue, you must approach them with profound humility and reverence, symbolised by a physical prostration. A heroic or proud individual is won over by offering them special recognition, honours or distinctions that set them apart from others and feed their desire for esteem. A person of low or greedy nature is easily swayed by even a small material gift, as their primary motivation is immediate gain. Finally, to win over an equal, someone of similar status and capability, you must demonstrate superior effort.

**N’ attadosaṃ paro jaññā, jaññā dosaṃ parassa tu,
kummo guhe iv’ aṅgāni, parabhāvañ-ca lakkhaye.**

Another should not know your fault, be like a tortoise that would hide its limbs, but one should know another’s fault, one should discern another’s nature.⁵⁵

One should not let others know one’s own faults, guarding them as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell for protection. Simultaneously, one should be keenly aware of the faults and true nature of others. This is not for gossip but for discernment and self-preservation. Knowing another’s weaknesses allows for careful navigation of relationships, while concealing one’s own prevents exploitation. It is a strategy for maintaining security and advantage in a complex social world.

⁵⁵ I translate this in the order acbd.

18. Akato
Not Done (by the Wise)⁵⁶
(21 Verses)

228 [stm.]

**Ussūraseyyaṃ ālasyaṃ, caṇḍikkaṃ dīghasuttiyaṃ,
 ekass' addhānagamaṇaṃ, paradār' upasevaṇaṃ,
 etaṃ Brahmaṇassev' assu, anattāya bhavissati.**

Sleeping till sunrise, laziness, ferocity, procrastination,
 traveling a long road alone, consorting with another's wife, if
 this is done by a Brahmin, it will be detrimental.

Sleeping past sunrise violates discipline. Laziness opposes diligent study.

Ferocity contradicts non-violence. Procrastination undermines duty.

Traveling a long road alone exposes one to danger and suspicion.

Consorting with another's wife breaches the most serious social and moral code. For a Brahmin, whose power rests on perceived purity and propriety, these acts are not just personal failings but a direct assault on his social role and spiritual standing, guaranteeing his downfall, and if these harm a Brahmin, they harm everyone.

⁵⁶ See the note on the title of the previous chapter.

**Surāyogo vikālo ca samajjāṃ na gharāṅgato,
khiḍḍādhutto pāpamitto alaso cha ime janā
mahābhogā vinassanti, hīnabhāvass’ idaṃ phalaṃ.**

The alcoholic, the one keeping late hours, the one not returning home from the festival, the one gambling for fun, the one having a bad friend, the one who is lazy: these six people destroy (even) great wealth, this is the fruit of a bad character.

Addiction to alcohol clouds judgment and drains resources. Keeping late hours leads to negligence and bad company. Not returning home from festivals signifies a lack of responsibility and attachment to revelry. Gambling for fun is a fast track to loss. Keeping bad friends brings negative influence. Laziness ensures no recovery from these other vices. Together, they form a web of decline. These habits are the inevitable fruit of a low character, where moral decay precedes and causes material collapse.

**Atisītaṃ ati-uṇhaṃ, atisāyam-idaṃ ahu,
iti vissaṭṭhakammante khaṇā accanti māṇave.**

It is too cold, it is too hot, it is too late, this is what they say,
thus young men leave off work until the chance has passed
them by.

The lazy person always finds a reason to delay work: it's too cold, too hot, or too late in the day. By constantly deferring action with these complaints, they let opportunity after opportunity slip away. Time passes them by while they are paralysed by minor discomforts. This is a portrait of wasted potential, where a person becomes a passive spectator to their own life, allowing the conditions for success which are effort and timeliness to be eroded by a preoccupation with perfect, and perfectly nonexistent, circumstances.

**Paranāsanato naṭṭho, pure va paranāsako,
siṅghaṃ va nāsaṇaṃ yāti, tiṇaṃ pāsādajhāpakaṃ.**

Through destroying others he is lost, previously he was a
destroyer of others, (now) he quickly goes to destruction, like
one who sets fire to a grass pavilion.

One who makes a habit of destroying others will inevitably meet with
destruction themselves. The process is swift and self-originated. Setting
fire to a grass pavilion may seem like an act of aggression against the
structure or its owner, but the fire quickly engulfs the arsonist as well.
Malicious intent creates a chain reaction of violence that cannot be
contained. The destroyer becomes the destroyed, illustrating the
inescapable law of deeds and their results where the means of
aggression become the instrument of one's own ruin.

**Na vissase amittassa, mittañ-cāpi na vissase,
kadāci kupito mitto, sabbadosapakāsako.**

Do not trust an enemy, and do not trust even a friend, (for) a friend, angered on occasion, may reveal all your faults.

One should not trust an enemy, but equally one should not place complete, blind trust even in a friend. A friend may possess intimate knowledge of your secrets and weaknesses. In a moment of passion, they could reveal all your faults, causing immense personal damage.

Therefore, a measure of discretion and self-protection must be maintained in all relationships, as human emotions are changeable and even good people can become instruments of harm when provoked.

**Kudesañ-ca kumittañ-ca kusambandhañ kubandhavañ
kudārañ-ca kurājānañ—dūrato parivajjaye.**

A bad land, a bad friend, a bad connection, a bad relation, a
bad wife and a bad king—you should avoid from afar.

A bad land is unproductive or lawless. A bad friend is a corrupting influence. A bad relationship is draining. A bad relative brings constant trouble. A bad wife destroys domestic peace. A bad king makes life oppressive and insecure. The instruction is to recognise the danger early and not become entangled at all. Prevention is paramount; extricating oneself later is often difficult or impossible. Discernment in these choices is the bedrock of security.

250 – Not Done (by the Wise)

234–235 [ana., adm.]

**Kakkaṭo asīso yāti, sappo ’pado va gacchati,
athanī kukkuṭīputtā—purise nāvamaññare.
Hīnaputto rājāmacco, bālaputto pi paṇḍito,
adhanassa putto seṭṭhi—purise nāvamaññare.**

A crab moves along without a head, a snake goes without feet,
a breastless hen (still) raises a brood—do not disregard men. A
low-born child may become a king’s minister, a fool’s child a
wise man, the child of a poor man a rich man—do not
disregard men.

Nature provides analogies: a crab moves effectively without a visible head; a snake travels without feet; a hen without a breast still raises chickens. So too, one should not disregard any man based on superficial or current status. A child from a low family may rise to be a minister. A fool’s son may become wise. A pauper’s child may amass wealth. The future is not determined by origin. These verses champion merit over birth, urging society to judge individuals by their capability, not their birth or pedigree.

**Yena-m-icchati sambandham, tena tīpi na kāraye:
vivādam-atthasambandham, parokkhe dāradassanam.**

With whom one desires a connection, with him do not do three things: quarrel, engage in a legal case or, behind his back, meeting with his wife.

If you wish to maintain a connection, be it friendship, alliance, or patronage, you must strictly avoid three acts that poison goodwill. First, do not engage in direct quarrelling, which breeds resentment. Second, do not become entangled in a lawsuit or legal dispute, which formalises conflict. Third, and most severely, never be alone with or look upon their wife, as this inevitably arouses jealousy and destroys trust. These prohibitions are about respecting boundaries, emotional, legal, and sexual, to keep the bond secure and functional.

**Iṅaseso aggiseso satruseso tatheva ca
punappunaṃ pavaḍḍhanti, tasmā sesaṃ na kāraye.**

The remnant of a debt, the remnant of a fire and likewise the remnant of an enemy, they can increase again and again, therefore you should not leave a remnant.

A remnant of debt can grow again with interest. A single ember left from a fire can rekindle a blaze. A surviving enemy can regroup and seek revenge. In each case, what seems like a finished problem retains the seed of its return. Therefore, in dealing with debts, conflicts, or dangers, one must not leave a remnant. The principle is to resolve matters completely: pay debts in full, extinguish fires totally and neutralise threats absolutely. Half-measures are invitations for potentially greater trouble.

**Kulajāto kulaputto, kulavaṃsasurakkhito,
attanā dukkhatto pi, hīnakammaṃ na kāraye.**

One born of a good family, a son of a good family, who protects the family lineage, even if afflicted by suffering himself, should not do a low deed.

A true scion of a good family, one who understands his role in protecting the family lineage and honour, maintains his conduct even in adversity. Even when afflicted by personal suffering, poverty, or misfortune, he must not resort to low deeds because actions like theft, deceit, or begging would bring disgrace upon the family name. His hardship does not excuse ethical compromise; in fact, it is precisely during trials that his character is tested and must hold firm. Personal integrity is the duty owed to one's ancestors and descendants.

**Samiddho dhanadhaññena na kaṭṭhodatiṇaggihi
sabbato duggato naṭṭho, tasmā na dukkaṭaṃ kare.**

Having no success in wealth, in grain, in timber, water, grass
and fire, the poor man has lost everything, therefore he should
do no more wrongdoing.

With no material buffer, the poor man has zero margin for error. Any further negative action, such as theft, deceit, violence would only generate the bad results that guarantee his continued or worsened suffering. His only remaining capital is his moral integrity. By committing to blameless conduct, he at least preserves his human dignity, avoids compounding his misery, and begins to create the positive seeds that are his sole hope for future improvement. In utter loss, restraint becomes his first and most necessary step toward recovery.

**Na gaṇass' aggato gacche, siddhe kamme samaṃ phalaṃ,
kammavipatti ce hoti, pharusam tassa bhāsaye.**

He should not go at the head of a crowd, (if) in the deed's
success the reward is the same, (for) if the deed fails, he might
be spoken to harshly.

If you go at the head of a crowd, you take public credit if the venture succeeds. However, the reward for success is often shared equally by all, not increased for the leader. Conversely, if the enterprise fails, the leader at the front bears the brunt of the blame and may be spoken to harshly. The leader assumes disproportionate risk of reputational damage for no guaranteed extra benefit. The wise course is to contribute effectively but avoid the conspicuous, vulnerable position of figurehead, where failure is personal and success is communal.

**Bālakko petadhūmo⁵⁷ ca, vuḍḍhitthi pallalodakaṃ,
āyukkhayakaraṃ, niccaṃ ratto ca dadhibhojanaṃ.**

The early morning sun, the smoke from the dead, an elderly lady and (stagnant) pond-water are life-shorteners, as is constantly eating curds at night.

The early morning sun, when its rays are considered sharp, is harmful. Smoke from a funeral pyre is polluting and inauspicious. Associating with an elderly woman is detrimental. Drinking stagnant pond-water brings disease. Constantly eating curds at night is considered indigestible and phlegm-producing in Ayurveda. While some items reflect symbolic beliefs, the core teaching is one of preventative care: certain habits and exposures, if constant, erode vitality. Longevity requires avoiding these subtle life-shorteners.

⁵⁷ I.e. the smoke from the burning of the dead, a particularly inauspicious occasion.

**Itthīnaṃ dujjanānañ-ca viśāso nopapajjate,
viśe siṅgimhi nadiyaṃ roge rājakulamhi ca.**

**Do not place trust in women, rogues, poison, a horned animal,
a river, an illness or a royal family.**

Women, in a context emphasising their perceived fickleness, rogues, poison, horned animals like bulls and rams, rivers, illnesses, and royal families are all inherently unstable or hazardous. Their nature is to change, strike, charge, flood, worsen, or turn against you. Trust implies reliance on consistency and safety, which these cannot provide. Some elements of life must be managed with constant caution and safeguards, never with assumed security.

**Ayuttakammārabhaṇaṃ, virodho
saṅghassa, yuddhañ-ca mahābalehi,
vissāsakammaṃ pamadāsu—niccaṃ
dvārāni maccussa vadanti vidvā.**

Undertaking unsuitable work, opposing the community,
fighting against the powerful, work requiring trust amongst
women—the wise always call these the doors to death.

Undertaking work for which you are unqualified leads to failure and disgrace. Opposing the community (*saṅgha*) or any powerful collective, brings overwhelming social force against you. Fighting against the politically or physically powerful is suicidal. Placing trust in women, in contexts of secrecy or loyalty, is seen as particularly risky due to perceived changeability. The wise recognise these as thresholds of mortal danger, and that to cross them is to willingly step from safety into a realm where the likely outcome is destruction.

**Thiyo seveyya n' accantaṃ, sādu bhuñjeyya nāhitaṃ,
pūjaye mānaye vuḍḍhe, garuṃ māyāya no bhaje.**

One should not associate with women excessively, one should not eat what is delicious (but) unbeneficial, one should worship and revere the elderly, one should not serve the teacher deceptively.

Do not associate with women excessively, as over-familiarity can lead to passion, scandal or neglect of duty. Do not eat delicious food that is unwholesome or unbeneficial to health, avoiding pleasure that harms the body. Worship and revere the elderly, gaining from their wisdom and accumulating merit. Finally, do not serve your teacher deceptively; dishonesty in this sacred relationship corrupts the learning itself and severs the root of true knowledge. Each rule checks a different kind of excess: sensual, culinary, social, and spiritual.

**Vinā satthaṃ na gaccheyya sūro saṅgābhūmiyaṃ,
paṇḍitv-addhagū vāṇijo videsagamano tathā.**

A hero should not go to a battlefield without a weapon,
likewise a wise man on the highway, a merchant going to a
foreign land.

A hero must not go to battle without his weapon; his courage is useless without the means to fight. Similarly, a wise man traveling a dangerous highway must not go without preparation, whether that be a companion, a weapon or supplies. Likewise, a merchant venturing to a foreign land must not go without protection. In each case, the intrinsic quality is insufficient without the necessary external support. Forethought and equipping oneself are what translate potential into success and ensure survival in challenging endeavors.

**Dehī ti vacanadvārā, dehaṭṭhā pañca Devatā
sajja niyyanti: dhī kitti mati hirī sirī pi ca.**

Because of (repeatedly) saying “Give” through the speech door, five divinities established in the body immediately leave: wisdom, fame, intelligence, conscience and fortune.

The act of repeatedly saying Give! is not just a social request; it is an invocation of need that drives away five divine qualities resident within a person: wisdom, fame, intelligence, moral conscience, and fortune or grace. These are inner treasures that constitute a noble character. By constantly focusing on lack and appealing to others’ resources, one diminishes one’s own intrinsic wealth. The beggar’s mindset erodes the very qualities that could lift him out of beggary.

**Natthī ti vacanaṃ dukkhaṃ, Dehī ti vacanaṃ tathā,
vākyam Natthī ti Dehī ti, mā bhaveyya bhavābhava.**

The word “Nothing” is painful, the word “Give” is painful,
may this speech “Nothing” and “Give” not arise in repeated
existences.

Both having to say “There is nothing” when asked, and having to say “Give!” when in need, are experiences of suffering. One exposes one’s emptiness; the other exposes one’s dependency. The aspiration is that in future existences, one may be free from the necessity of both these painful utterances. This is a wish for self-sufficiency and abundance, not for immense wealth, but for enough to never be confronted with the shame of having nothing or the humiliation of having to beg.

**Yattha posam na jānanti jātiyā vinayena vā,
na tатtha mānaṃ kay¹rātha, vasam-aññātake jane.**

There where a man's birth and conduct are not known, there he should not display pride, while dwelling amongst unrelated people.

In a place where your birth and your past conduct are unknown, you have no established reputation or social credit. Therefore, it is foolish and dangerous to act with pride or arrogance. Among unrelated people, you are an unknown quantity, and pride will only provoke resentment, suspicion or challenge. The wise course is to be observant, modest, and respectful, earning trust through present behavior rather than assuming status from an unknown past.

19. Ñātabbo To Be Known (8 Verses)

249 [stm.]

**Mātāhīnassa dubbhāsā, pitāhīnassa dukriyā,
ubho mātā pitā hīnā dubbhāsā ca dukkiriya.**

One having a base mother has bad speech, one having a base
father, bad conduct, one having both a base mother and father
has both bad speech and conduct.

A child raised by a base or ignoble mother is said to develop bad speech: harsh, untruthful, or vulgar language learned through imitation and lack of correction. A child of a base father develops bad conduct: unethical or foolish actions, lacking a proper male role model. If both parents are base, the child inherits the full spectrum of deficiency: corrupted speech and conduct. While not accounting for individual effort, this verse underscores the profound responsibility of parents and the heavy inheritance of familial culture.

**Mātāseṭṭhassa subhāsā, pitāseṭṭhassa sukriyā,
ubho mātā pitā seṭṭhā subhāsā ca sukiriya.**

One having an excellent mother has good speech, one having
an excellent father, good conduct, one having both an
excellent mother and father has both good speech and conduct.

An excellent mother, through her gentle, truthful and wise speech,
instills good speech in her child. An excellent father, through his
righteous and disciplined actions, models good conduct. When both
parents are exemplary, the child receives the complete inheritance of
nobility: eloquent speech and virtuous behavior. Family is the primary
school of character. A child's moral and social worth is not accidental
but is made known through the quality of the parents who shaped them.

**Atidīgho mahāmuḷho, majjhimo ca vicakkhaṇo,
Vāsudevaṃ purekkhitvā, sabbe vāmanakā saṭhā.**

One too tall is a great fool, one of medium height is
discerning, after placing Vāsudeva at the fore, all dwarfs are
deceitful.

This is folk-wisdom, and should be not be taken as truly defining character. An excessively tall person was thought to be clumsy, slow and lacking acuity. A person of medium height is deemed discerning and well-proportioned in mind and body. The reference is to Vāmana, the fifth avatar of Viṣṇu, who used deception to humble the demon king Mahābali. Appearing as a dwarf Brahmin, he requested only three paces of land, yet expanded these to cosmic proportions, measuring the earth and heavens in two steps, and placing his third on Bali's head.

**Ācāro kulam-akkhāti, desam-akkhati bhāsitaṃ,
sambhavo pemam-akkhāti, deham-akkhāti bhojanaṃ.**

Conduct makes known the family, speech makes known the district, generation makes known love, the body makes known the food.

A person's conduct, their manners, ethics, and daily habits, discloses the quality of their family upbringing. Their speech, including accent and vocabulary, reveals their native district or region. Their lineage or social origin reveals the depth of genuine affection others hold for them. Finally, their physical body including its health, stature, and appearance reveals the quality and quantity of the food they have consumed. Nothing is hidden; every aspect of a person tells a story of their past.

253 [ana., stm.]

**Jalappamāṇam kumudanāḷam,
kulappamāṇam karaṇakammaṁ,
paññāpamāṇam kathitavākyam,
bhūmippamāṇam tajjalatiṇam.⁵⁸**

The measure of water is the lotus stalk, the measure of families is actions and deeds, the measure of wisdom is talk and speech, the measure of the land is the grass and water there.

The length of a lotus stalk reveals the depth of the water it grows in.

The actions and deeds of individuals are the true measure of their family's worth, not mere lineage. The content and quality of a person's talk and speech are the measure of their actual wisdom, not their claims. The types of grasses and availability of water are the measure of the land's fertility. In each case, the tangible, observable effect is the proof of the hidden cause or condition.

⁵⁸ Bechert and Braun mark this verse as impossible to reconstruct, but do not say why. Probably it is because the metre is unknown, in the sense of not being named anywhere, but its structure is coherent internally. The metre of the parallel is Triṣṭubh.

**Javena bhadraṁ jānanti, balibaddhaṁ ca vāhiye,
dohena dhenuṁ jānanti, bhāsamānañ-ca paṇḍitaṁ.**

They know a good (horse) by its speed, and a draught animal by its load, they know a cow by its milk, and a wise one by his speech.

A good horse is known by its speed, not its looks. A strong draught animal is known by the load it can pull. A good cow is known by the quantity of milk it gives. By analogy, a wise person is known by his speech. Not by silence or reputation, but by what he says when he speaks: its truth, benefit, depth and timeliness. The essence of each being is revealed through its characteristic function. For a human, that highest function is intelligent, purposeful communication.

**Jāneyya pesane bhaccaṃ, bandhavaṃ pi bhayāgame,
byasane ca tathā mittāṃ, dāraṇ-ca vibhavakkhaye.**

You can know a dependent in his service, a relative at the approach of danger, likewise a friend in misfortune, and a wife in the destruction of wealth.

A dependent's loyalty is known when given an errand; will he be diligent or deceitful? A relative's affection is known when danger approaches; will he help or flee? A friend's worth is known in misfortune; will he stand by you or abandon you? A wife's true nature is known when wealth is destroyed; will she remain devoted or seek to leave? These are the crucibles that separate pretense from genuine bonds. Love and loyalty are actions, visible only when tested.

**Vinā sattham na jānanti kālam sabbe pi jotikā—
kukkuṭā pana jānanti, tato rukkhā tato bhvāpā.**

Deprived of all their treatises astrologers do not know the
time—but cocks know, and trees and aquatic creatures.

Astrologers, despite their elaborate treatises, cannot accurately tell the time without their instruments and charts. Yet, the cock knows dawn instinctively. Trees sense seasonal changes. Aquatic creatures respond to tidal and lunar cycles. Theoretical knowledge, when disconnected from direct perception and natural wisdom, is inferior to innate, embodied understanding. It mocks hollow scholarship and praises the unerring knowledge born of direct, living connection with the world.

20. Alaṅkāro An Ornament (9 Verses)

257 [ana., stm.]

**Pathaviyā bhūsanam Meru, rattiyā bhūsanam sasī,
janānam bhūsanam rājā, senānam bhūsanam gajo.**

Meru is the adornment of the earth, the moon is the
adornment of the night, the king is the adornment of the
people, an elephant is the adornment of the army.

Mount Meru, the cosmic axis, is the ornament of the earth itself, giving it grandeur and centrality. The moon is the ornament of the night, providing its light and beauty. A righteous king is the ornament of the people, their protector and the source of order and prosperity. A mighty elephant is the ornament of the army, representing its peak strength and terror for foes. True ornament is not mere decoration, but that which fulfills its highest purpose.

**Sīlattā sobhate rūpaṃ, cārīttā sobhate kulaṃ,
sapupphaṃ sobhate 'raññaṃ, sagajaṃ sobhate balaṃ.**

Through virtue the body shines, through conduct a family
shines, having flowers a wilderness shines, having elephants an
army shines.

A physical body shines through virtue, not cosmetics. A family's reputation shines through the good conduct of its members, not its wealth. A forest wilderness shines when it is in bloom, displaying its fertile nature. An army shines when it possesses war elephants, the ultimate instruments of its power. In each case, the ornament is the essential, excellent quality that is proper to the thing itself. Beauty is the visible expression of inner virtue or inherent potency.

**Kokilānaṃ saddaṃ rūpaṃ, nārīrūpaṃ patibbataṃ,
vijjā rūpaṃ arūpānaṃ, khamā rūpaṃ tapassinaṃ.**

The beauty of cuckoos is their sound, the beauty of women is devotion to their husband, the beauty of minds is their knowledge, the beauty of an ascetic is forgiveness.

For a cuckoo, beauty is not its plumage but its melodious song. For a woman, in the traditional social framework, her beauty and status are secured through devotion to her husband. For the mind its beauty is knowledge. For an ascetic, whose practice involves enduring hardship, the supreme beauty is forgiveness, the ability to relinquish anger. True adornment is the perfection of one's own specific virtue.

**Kisā sobhā tapassī ca, thūlā sobhā catuppadā,
vijjā sobhā manussā ca, itthī sobhā sasāmikā.**

Ascetics shine when lean, quadrapeds shine when stout,
humans shine when learned, and women shine with their
husbands.

Ascetics shine when lean, as emaciation evidences their rigorous discipline and detachment from the body. Quadraped shine when stout, as robust flesh displays its health and strength for labor or battle.

Human beings shine when learned, as knowledge fulfills human potential. Women shine when with their husbands, representing social fulfillment, protection and the fulfillment of her traditional role. The standard of beauty is therefore defined as functional appropriateness.

**Rattihīno na candaro, ūmihīno na sāgaro,
haṁsahīno na saṁphullo, itthihīno na puriso.**

Without the night there is no moon, without waves there is no ocean, without geese there is no flowering (lake), without a woman there is no man.

The moon only becomes clearly visible in the nighttime. An ocean is defined by its waves. A lake is brought to life by the presence of geese. A woman is completed and fulfilled by having a husband, which reflects the societal view of the time that a woman's identity and social standing were intrinsically linked to marriage. Just as these natural phenomena are coupled, so too are woman and husband seen as a fundamental, completing pair.

**Vatthahīnaṃ n' alaṅkāraṃ, patihīnā na nārikā,
sippahīno na puriso, dhenuhīnaṃ na bhojanaṃ.**

There is no ornament without a cloth, no woman without a husband, no (good) man without a craft, no food without a cow.

An ornament needs a cloth to adorn; otherwise, it is just an object. A woman, in this view, needs a husband to have social status and purpose.

A man needs a craft or skill to be considered a capable, respectable person. A proper meal requires the products of a cow. Each item is the essential support that gives meaning and function to the other. Without its basis, the superior thing is pointless.

**Dīpake dīpako cando, nāriyā dīpako pati,
tiloke dīpako Dhammo, suputto kuladīpako.**

The moon illuminates at (the time for) a lamp, a woman
illuminates her husband, the Dhamma illuminates the three
worlds, a good child illuminates a family.

When lamplight is needed, the moon illuminates the world. In the domestic sphere, a wife illuminates or brings honour to her husband. For all three worlds, the Dhamma is the illuminator, revealing truth and ending darkness. For a family lineage, a good child is its illuminator, bringing it fame and continuity. Light here is a metaphor for glory, understanding and legacy. The greatest sources of light are not physical but moral and spiritual.

264 [ana., stm.]

**Aputtakam gharam suññam, desam suññam arājakam,
apaññassa mukham suññam, sabbasuññā daliddatā.**

A home is empty without a child, a country is empty without a king, a mouth is empty without wisdom, poverty is completely empty.

A home without a child is empty of laughter, legacy and future support. A country without a king is empty of order, justice, and security. The mouth of a person without wisdom is empty of meaningful speech, offering only noise or malice. Finally, poverty is declared to be completely empty: it is the void that encompasses all other voids, lacking wealth, opportunity, respect, and often hope. Emptiness here is the worldly desolation of lack.

265 [ana., stm.]

**Sotaṃ suteneva na kuṇḍalena,
dānena pāṇī na tu kaṅkaṇena,
ābhāti kāyo purisuttamassa
paropakārena na candanena.**

The ear shines through hearing, not through an earring, the hand shines through giving, but not through a bracelet, the body of an excellent man shines through helping others, not through sandalwood.

The ear shines through what it hears, the Dhamma, good counsel, poetry, not merely by earrings. The hand shines through giving, not by bracelets. The entire body of an excellent man shines through helping others, not by the application of sandalwood paste. External adornments are superficial and inert. The real beauty of a human being radiates from their virtuous conduct, from their receptivity to truth, their generosity, and their compassionate action.

21. Rājadharmo

Kingly Duty⁵⁹

(22 Verses)

266 [adm.]

**Dānaṃ sīlaṃ pariccāgaṃ ajjavaṃ maddavaṃ tapaṃ
akodhaṃ avihimsaṅ-ca khantī ca avirodhanāṃ—
das’ ete dhamme rājāno appamattena dhāreyyuṃ.**

Giving, virtue, charity, sincerity, humility, austerity, non-
anger, non-violence, patience and non-confrontation—uphold
these ten kingly ethics with heedfulness.

The ten royal duties begin with giving and virtue, the bases of generosity and moral authority. Charity is self-sacrifice for the people. Sincerity and humility ensure honesty and approachability. Austerity is self-restraint. Non-anger, non-violence, patience, and non-confrontation are the pacific virtues that prevent tyranny. A king must uphold these with heedfulness, as they are the Dhamma that transforms power from a curse into a blessing for the realm.

⁵⁹ This chapter was written at a time when the norm was a country ruled by a king and his court. Those times have gone, of course, but still the advice can be applied to leaders (presidents, prime ministers, etc) of various sorts and at various levels of society (ministers, heads of organisations, etc.).

**Dānaṃ atthacarⁱyā piyavācā attasamaṃ pi ca—
saṅgahā caturo ime, munindena pakāsītā.**

Generosity, helpful conduct, friendly speech and impartiality—these four constituents of sympathy⁶⁰ were declared by the lord of sages.

Generosity wins hearts through material support. Helpful conduct provides assistance and service. Friendly speech uses kind, truthful, and unifying language. Impartiality means treating others as oneself and with consistency. For a king, these are not mere kindnesses but statecraft: they are the methods to unify the populace, foster loyalty and create a harmonious society where people feel seen, supported and respected by their ruler.

⁶⁰ *Saṅgaha* here, and in the parallel verse, is short for *saṅghavatthu*.

**Vane migā na labhanti mahābhayā niddāsukhaṃ,
rājāno pi na labhanti uttarathāmabhītato,
saṃsārabhayabhītena na ramanti ye paṇḍitā.**

Deer in the forest, having great fear, do not find the happiness of sleep, kings frightened by a superior strength also do not find it, those who are wise, frightened by the dangers of transmigration, do not take delight.

Deer in the forest are prey, perpetually anxious. Kings live in fear of rivals, rebels or superior powers. But the most significant comparison is with the wise. They are frightened by the dangers of transmigration—the endless cycle of birth, suffering and death. This fear is not paralysing but motivating; it drives them to seek liberation. Thus, the king's existential insecurity is likened to the seeker's spiritual urgency, both rooted in a correct understanding of danger.

**Khamā jāgariy’ uṭṭhānaṃ saṃvibhāgo day’ ikkhaṇā—
nāyakassa guṇā ete, icchitabbā hitatthino.**

Forgiveness, wakefulness, exertion, sharing, sympathy,
observation—these are the virtues of a leader, to be wished for
by one seeking benefit (for the people).

Wakefulness is vigilance against threats and negligence. Exertion is diligent effort. Sharing is generosity with wealth and credit. Sympathy is compassion for the suffering. Observation is the discernment to understand situations and people accurately. Together, these form the character of a ruler who is strong, generous, compassionate, and perceptive—a leader who truly seeks the benefit of those he governs.

**Paribhūto mudu hoti, atitikkho ca veravā,
etañ-ca ubhayamñ ñatvā, anumajjhamñ samācare.**

A mild one is contemptible, one too harsh is an enemy,
knowing these two, he should practice without going to
extremes.⁶¹

If a king is excessively mild, he is despised and his law is flouted. If he is excessively harsh, he is feared as an enemy and invites rebellion. Absolute mildness or absolute harshness cannot establish greatness. Therefore, the wise king must avoid both, by employing measured severity only when necessary and being merciful when appropriate.

This is the Middle Path applied to governance: knowing the two extremes, he acts at the right time without going to either extreme.

⁶¹ Lit: along the middle.

**Nekantamudunā sakkā ekantatikhiṇena vā
mahatte ṭhapituṃ attam, tasmā ubhayam-ācare.**

It is not possible to establish oneself in greatness by absolute mildness, or absolute harshness, therefore one should practice both.

A king cannot achieve true greatness by adhering exclusively to absolute mildness. Unwavering gentleness, while kind, invites contempt, exploitation and chaos; people cease to respect or obey. Conversely, absolute harshness breeds only fear, resentment and rebellion; people oppose rather than follow. Neither extreme alone can establish enduring authority or respect. The wise leader cultivates the discernment to be gentle when gentleness is effective and firm when necessary. This is not inconsistency but contextual mastery.

**Kassako vāṇijo ’macco samaṇo sutasīlavā
tesu vipulajātesu raṭṭhaṃ pi vipulaṃ siyā.
Tesu dubbalajātesu raṭṭhaṃ pi dubbalaṃ siyā,
saraṭṭhaṃ vipulaṃ tasmā dhāreyya raṭṭhabhāravā.**

The farmer, the merchant, the minister, the ascetic, the learned and virtuous, when these are abundant and productive, the kingdom will be abundant too. When these are weak the kingdom will be weak also, therefore one who has the burden of the kingdom should uphold the kingdom’s abundance.

The king does not create prosperity in isolation; he depends on the vitality of these foundational pillars: the farmer, the merchant, the minister, the ascetic, the learned and virtuous. When these groups are abundant and productive, thriving in their respective functions, the entire kingdom flourishes. Conversely, if they are weak or oppressed, the kingdom becomes weak. Therefore, the ruler’s primary duty is not to extract from these groups, but to actively uphold their abundance, to create policies and maintain justice that allows them to prosper.

**Mahārukkhassa phalino āmaṃ chindati yo phalaṃ
rasañ-c’ assa na jānāti, bījañ-c’ assa vinassati.
Mahārukkhūpamaṃ raṭṭhaṃ adhammena pasāsati
rasañ-c’ assa na jānāti, raṭṭhañ-cāpi vinassati.**

He who cuts the unripe fruit from a great tree does not get to know the fruit’s essential nature, and its seed is destroyed.

Like the great tree, the one who rules a kingdom unrighteously does not get to know its essential nature, and the kingdom is destroyed.

A king who governs unrighteously is like a foolish man who cuts a green, unripe fruit from a great tree. His actions are premature and destructive. Similarly, a king never gets to know the kingdom’s essential nature, the prosperity and joy that a mature, well-ruled kingdom yields. The seed represents the future, the continuity of the dynasty, the legacy of his rule and the potential for future growth. Unrighteous rule thus commits a double crime: it robs the present of its potential goodness and ensures there is no viable future.

**Mahārukkhassa phalino pakkaṃ chindati yo phalaṃ
rasañ-c’ assa vijānāti, bījañ-c’ assa na nassati.
Mahārukkhūpamaṃ raṭṭhaṃ, dhammena yo pasāsati,
rasañ-c’ assa vijānāti, raṭṭhañ-cāpi na nassati.**

He who cuts the ripe fruit from a great tree gets to know the fruit’s essential nature, and its seed is not destroyed. Like the great tree, the one who rules a kingdom righteously gets to know its essential nature, and the kingdom is not destroyed.

A king who governs righteously is like a wise man who patiently waits and harvests only the ripe fruit. This king truly gets to know its essential nature. He experiences the true rewards of kingship: a stable, prosperous, and harmonious realm where Dhamma prevails. Furthermore, by acting with justice and foresight, he preserves the seed. The future stability of the kingdom, the loyalty of the people, and the rightful succession is not destroyed. Righteous rule is thus an act of cultivation and preservation, securing well-being for both the present and generations to come.

**Yo ca rājā janapadaṃ adhammena pasāsati,
sabbosadhīhi so rājā viruddho hoti khattiyo,
tatheva negame hiṃsaṃ, ye yuttā kayavikkaye,
ojadānabalīkāre sa kosena virujjhati.**

The king who rules the state unrighteously, and likewise, who opposes the treasury (by allowing) those householders oppressively engage in buying and selling, and exacting taxes and labour, that king the nobles oppose with all remedies.⁶²

The king who rules unrighteously here is not merely passively unjust; he actively permits or engages in economic oppression. This includes allowing merchants to engage in exploitative buying and selling, meaning price gouging or monopolistic practices that harm the people. It also includes the unjust exaction of taxes and forced labor. When the king fails in his duty to protect the people from such exploitation he betrays the very purpose of kingship. The nobles, as defenders of the social order, will then oppose him with all remedies.

⁶² We have to take these *pādas* in the order: abhefgcd. The prose order would be: *Yo rājā janapadaṃ adhammena pasāsati, tatheva ye negame hiṃsaṃ, kayavikkaye yuttā, ojadānabalīkāre ca, sa kosena virujjhati, so khattiyo rājā sabbosadhīhi viruddho hoti.*

**Pahāravarakhettaññū saṅgāme katanissame
ussite himsayam rājā sa balena virujjhati.**

The king who, when violence has arisen, opposes those who know the best place to strike and are accomplished in battle is opposed by his own army.

If, in a time of conflict or unrest, if the king harms his most capable subjects, specifically those who know the best place to strike and are accomplished in battle, he commits a fatal error. These are the very men upon whom his power and security depend. By acting with ingratitude, jealousy or cruelty towards his own best defenders, he severs his most vital support. His greatest strength becomes his greatest enemy, ensuring his defeat by the very force meant to protect him.

**Tatheva isayo hiṃsaṃ, saṃyame brahmacāriyo,
adhammacārī khattiyo, sa saggena virujjhati.**

Likewise, the unrighteous warrior (king) who harms the restrained, celibate seers, is opposed by heaven.

If an unrighteous king uses his power to harm seers who are restrained and celibate, he violates a sacred trust. These individuals represent the moral and spiritual conscience of the kingdom. Their well-being is seen as linked to the blessings of heaven. Therefore, the king who attacks them is said to be opposed by heaven. This means he loses all divine favor, his actions generate the worst possible result and he forfeits the moral legitimacy that underpins his rule. His transgression is cosmic, guaranteeing his ultimate ruin.

**Sayaṃ katā na parena mahānajjo ’juvaṅkatā,
issarena tathā raññā saraṭṭhe adhipaccattā.**

Great rivers are not made straight or crooked by another,
similarly for a king who, through power, becomes sovereign in
his own kingdom.

Just as a great river’s course, whether straight or crooked, is determined by its own nature and flow, not by an external force, but by their own inherent nature, so a king’s sovereignty and the quality of his rule are forged by his own power and choices. His virtue or vice, his success or failure, is self-made. The kingdom responds to his will and character as the land responds to the water. This is both an empowerment and a solemn warning: the king is the architect of his own reign.

**Putto pāpaṃ kato mātā, sisso pāpaṃ kato garu,
nāgarehi kato rājā, rājaṃ pāpaṃ purohito.⁶³**

A mother (is blamed) for the wrongs of her child, a teacher for the wrongs of his pupil, a king for what is done by the citizens, a chaplain for the wrongs of the king.

A mother is held responsible for the wrongs of her child, a teacher for those of his pupil. By this logic, the king is held responsible for the misdeeds of his citizens—their corruption and suffering reflect his failure to rule justly. Furthermore, the royal chaplain is held responsible for the moral and ritual failings of the king himself. This creates a hierarchy of accountability: spiritual guide, king, people. It emphasises that leadership at every level bears the social burden for the conduct of those in their charge.

⁶³ The case relations in this verse are incorrect, which is probably why Bechert and Braun have flagged it as unreconstructable. *Putto* and *sisso* are in the nominative case, and *rājaṃ* is accusative, where genitives or instrumentals are required in all three instances, leaving the predication to be inferred.

**Puññāpuññaṃ karontesu chabhāgo ekadesakaṃ
rājā labhati sabbehi, tasmā pāpāni vāraye,
puññaṃ-eva pavaḍḍhento—janakāyaṃ pasāsaye.**

Amongst those performing merit and demerit the king receives one part out of six, therefore he should prevent demerit, and promote merit—(so) should he rule the population.

The king is said to receive a sixth part of the merit and demerit generated by all his subjects. This makes the moral health of the populace his direct personal concern. Therefore, his duty is not passive: he must actively prevent demerit and promote merit. His own fortune is inextricably linked to the ethical climate of his kingdom. Righteous rule is thus the ultimate act of self-interest and public good.

**Bālassa jīvitam appaṁ, paṇḍitassa bahutaram,
janakāyassa rājā va rājadhammo va rājunaṁ.**

The king has a duty to the people and to (other) kings, the life of a foolish king is short, the life of a wise king much longer.

A foolish king's life is short in length because it ignores the duties to his people and to other kings provoking disorder and opposition; whereas a wise king's life is much longer, because he fulfils these duties. This implies a code of conduct in regard to the people he governs, and towards other kings and countries, based on the virtues of justice, honesty, and non-aggression. Wisdom extends one's influence in both personal and political spheres, and leads to a longer life and greater influence.

**Anāyakā vinassanti, nassanti bahunāyakā,
thīnāyakā vinassanti, nassanti susunāyakā.**

Without a leader they perish, with many leaders they perish,
with a female leader they perish, with a young leader they
perish.

Without a leader, a group falls into anarchy. With many leaders, it suffers from conflicting commands and factionalism. With a female leader, it was traditionally thought to be weak. With a young leader, it lacks experience and maturity. The ideal, implied but not stated, is a single, mature, male leader of wisdom and virtue. The quality, unity and appropriateness of leadership are existential factors for any community, but especially for a kingdom.

**Kacchapīnañ-ca macchīnañ kukkuṭīnañ-ca dhenunañ
puttaposo yathā hoti, tathā macesu rājunañ.**

Just as amongst turtles, fish, chickens and cows, there is the
nurturing of children, so amongst men there is a nurturing
(provided by) kings.

Just as turtle, fish, hen, and cow mothers naturally nurture and protect
their offspring, so too is it the natural duty of kings to nurture their
people. The king is the parent of the populace. This nurturing involves
protection from external enemies and internal crime, provision in times
of famine, and the fostering of conditions for growth and prosperity.
The king's power is legitimised not by conquest, but by this paternal,
caring function.

22. Upasevako The Courtier⁶⁴ (36 Verses)

288 [adm.]

**Na hi rājakulam patto aññāto labhate yasam,
nāsūro nātidummedho, na pamatto kudācanañi.**

When someone unknown has reached the royal family he does
not receive fame (immediately), he should never be⁶⁵ an
enemy,⁶⁶ nor exceedingly stupid, nor heedless.

Upon first reaching the royal court, he is unknown and cannot expect immediate fame or high status. He must patiently build his reputation. During this vulnerable period, he must avoid three fatal mistakes: he should never act as an adversary to others, he must not be foolish or lack discernment, and he must never be heedless or negligent in his duties. Success at court is a gradual cultivation of trust, and these prohibitions are the foundational disciplines for survival and eventual advancement.

⁶⁴ This chapter is entirely derived from the *Rājivasati* (the King's Residence) section of *Vidhurapaṇḍitajātaka* (Ja 545, PTS) with a few omissions, and summaries. There are a number of variant readings also, important ones are noted here. The numbering follows the PTS translation.

⁶⁵ Reading an unstated *bhaveyya*.

⁶⁶ Understanding line c as *na+asūro, asūras* were the enemy of the gods.

**Yadā sīlañ-ca paññañ-ca soceyyañ-cādhigacchati,
atha vissasite tamhi, guyhañ-c' assa na rakkhati.**

When (the king) finds he has virtue, wisdom and purity, then
(only) he may confide in him, and not guard his secrets.

Trust is not given freely but is awarded based on demonstrated character. The king observes the courtier over time. When the king ascertains that the man possesses true virtue in his conduct, practical wisdom in statecraft, and purity of intention only then will the king begin to confide in him. At that point, the king will no longer feel the need to hide his secrets from him. Trust is the currency of the inner court, purchased with observable integrity and competence.

290 [adm.]

**Divā vā yadi vā rattim, rājakicesu paṇḍito
ajjhiṭṭho na vikappeyya—sa rājivasatim vase.**

Whether by day or by night, the wise one when asked
regarding his duties to the king should not waver—(then) he
may dwell in the king's residence.⁶⁷

The wise courtier must be perpetually ready to attend to the king's business, whether by day or by night. When summoned or given a task, he must not delay, make excuses or delegate carelessly; he must arrange it promptly and effectively. This constant availability and dependable execution of duty is the basic qualification that permits him to dwell in the king's residence. His home within the palace is earned by being a ready instrument of the royal will at all hours.

⁶⁷ Line d becomes a much repeated phrase below. Three verses in Ja are omitted in Dhn here.

**Na rañño samakaṃ vatthaṃ, na mālaṃ na vilepanaṃ,
ākappaṃ sarakuttiṃ vā na rañño sadisaṃ-ācare.**

He should not have clothes the same as the king's, nor garlands
or ointments, let him not have the deportment, affect a voice,
or live like the king.

A courtier must never dress in clothes equal in finery to the king's, nor adorn himself with similar garlands or ointments. More subtly, he must not copy the king's distinctive deportment, gait, or manner of speaking. To mimic the sovereign is to implicitly challenge his unique status and could be interpreted as treasonous ambition. In the visual economy of power, the courtier must consciously maintain his subordination, ensuring his appearance and demeanor always reflect his position, never blurring the lines of hierarchy.

**Kiḷe rājā amaccehi bhar'yāhi parivārito,
nāmacco rājabhar'yāsu bhāvaṃ kubbetha paṇḍito.**

The king may sport with his wives while surrounded by his ministers,⁶⁸ (but) the wise minister must not be intimate with the king's wives.

In moments of leisure, the king may relax and sport with his wives while surrounded by his ministers. In this informal setting, the wise minister must exercise extreme mindfulness. He must remember his position. This means he must maintain strict propriety, formal respect, and emotional distance toward the king's wives. Any hint of undue familiarity, flirtation or personal attention could be misconstrued as disloyalty or lust, inviting catastrophic jealousy and wrath. Even in play, the courtier's conduct must be guarded.

⁶⁸ The Cowell translation has: "If the king sports with his ministers or surrounded by his wives," which is surely wrong.

**Anuddhato acapalo nipako saṃvutindriyo
manopaṇidhisampanno—sa rājivasatiṃ vase.**

(When) not arrogant, not fickle, discerning, having senses under control, endowed with a well-directed mind—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

He must be not arrogant, as pride offends. Not fickle, as inconsistency is untrustworthy. Discerning, being able to understand complex situations.

Most crucially, he must have his senses under control, mastering the impulses of desire, anger and distraction. Finally, he must have a well-directed mind, one focused on duty and the king's welfare. This composite of humility, steadiness, discernment, self-mastery and right intention is the psychological foundation that allows him to reside at court without falling into its many traps.

**Nāssa bharⁱyāhi kiḷeyya, na manteyya rahogato,
nāssa kose dhanam gaṇhe—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

He should not sport with (the king's) wives, he should not hold secret counsel (with them), he should not take wealth from (the king's) treasury—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

First, he should not sport with the king's wives, this protects against betrayal and secures the royal lineage. Second, do not hold secret counsel with them, this means no private meetings or plots that could be construed as conspiracy. Third, do not take wealth from the treasury, this guards against embezzlement and corruption. Violating any of these is a capital offense. Adherence to them is the bare minimum for physical survival within the palace walls.

**Na niddaṃ bahuṃ maññeyya, na madāya suraṃ pive,
nāssa dāye mige haññe—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

He should not think too much of sleep, he should not drink liquor to excess, he should not kill (the king's) animals in the park—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

Thinking too much of sleep signifies laziness and neglect of duty. Drinking liquor to excess leads to loss of judgment, loose speech, and disgraceful behavior. Killing the king's animals in the park is an act of presumptuous theft and disrespect for the king's property. Together, these represent failures of discipline, self-control, and respect. A courtier addicted to sleep, drink or arrogant recreation becomes unreliable and contemptible, unfit for the trust and responsibility of his position.

**Nāssa pīṭhaṃ na pallaṅkaṃ, na kocchaṃ na nāvam⁶⁹ rathaṃ,
“Sammato ’mhī” ti ārūhe—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

He should not, (thinking) “I am honoured,” mount (the king’s) seat, couch, stool, boat or chariot—(then) he may dwell in the king’s residence.

A courtier must never, upon feeling honoured or favoured, presume to use the king’s personal possessions. This includes his seat, his couch, his footstool, his boat or his chariot. These items are extensions of the king’s sovereign person. To use them without explicit command is to symbolically usurp his place. It is an act of *lèse-majesté* that would be seen as a direct challenge to royal authority. Humility must govern even the courtier’s interaction with objects.

⁶⁹ Ja reads: *nāgam*, elephant.

297 [adm.]

**Nātidūre bhaje⁷⁰ rañño n’ accāsanne vicakkaṇo,
sammukhañ-c’ assa tiṭṭheyya, sandissanto sabhattuno.**

A discerning person should not attend on the king from too far
or too near, he should stand facing him, being visible to his
lord.⁷¹

A discerning courtier must find the middle way in proximity. Standing too far suggests disengagement or disrespect. Standing too near is intrusive and threatening. The ideal is to be close enough to be attentive to what is said but not encroaching. Furthermore, he should stand facing the king and be visible to his lord. This posture signals availability, respect and transparency. It is a non-verbal language of loyal service, demonstrating he is present, attentive and has nothing to hide.

⁷⁰ Ja: *bhave*: should not be.

⁷¹ Cowell has for this last line: “telling something for his lord to hear.”

**“Na me rājā sakhā⁷² hoti, na rājā hoti methuno,”
khippaṃ kujjhanti rājāno, sūlen’ akkhi⁷³ va ghaṭṭitaṃ.**

“The king is not my friend, the king is not an intimate,” kings
quickly get angry, as though struck in the eye by a needle.

A courtier must never forget the fundamental nature of his relationship with the king. He is not the king’s friend in an equal sense, nor is he an intimate peer. The relationship is inherently hierarchical and perilous.

Kings get angry quickly because their pride and power make them acutely sensitive to slight. The simile captures the sudden, intense and disproportionate rage a minor offense can provoke. This awareness should instill a constant, careful fear and respect.

⁷² Ja: *samkhā*, the king does not count.

⁷³ Text reads *sūlen’*. Ja reads: *sūken’* by a hair.

**Na pūjito maññamāno, medhāvī paṇḍito naro
pharusañ patimanteyya rājānañ parisamgatañ.⁷⁴**

Without thinking (himself) honoured, a wise, intelligent man
should not reply harshly to the king in the midst of the
assembly.

Even if a wise and intelligent man feels respected or correct on an issue, he must never engage in argumentative or harsh speech with the king when he is surrounded by his court. To contradict or correct the king in front of others is to publicly undermine his authority, causing him to lose face. Such an act, regardless of its factual merit, is political suicide. The wise courtier saves his counsel for private moments, preserving the king's public dignity at all costs.

⁷⁴ Ja: *parisamkitam*; a suspicious (king).

300 [adm.]

**Laddhadvāro labhe dvāraṃ,⁷⁵ neva rājūsu vissase,
aggīva saṃyato tiṭṭhe—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

Having been granted the door (previously), he should (still) take permission for the door (in the future), he should never trust kings, he should remain heedful, as he is regarding fire— (then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

Even if a courtier has been granted an audience before, he must not presume future access. He should humbly request it anew each time. In

all matters within the royal domain, he must maintain a stance of extreme caution, as cautious as one would be around a blazing fire. This mindset of perpetual formality and vigilance prevents the complacency and over-familiarity that lead to fatal errors. The king's door is never to be taken for granted.

⁷⁵ Ja: *laddhavāro labhe vāraṃ*; having been given an opportunity, he should take it.

**Puttaṃ vā bhātaraṃ vā pi sampaggaṇhāti khattiyo
gāmehi niḡamehi vā raṭṭhehi janapadehi,
tuṇhībhūto v' udikkheyya, na bhaṇe chekapāpakam.**

Whether a warrior (king) favours a son or brother with
villages, trading posts, kingdoms or states, he should observe it
silently, he should not say it is right or wrong.

If the king chooses to grant villages, towns, or even whole provinces to his own son or brother, the courtier must remain completely silent. He is to merely observe. He must not offer an opinion, labeling the gift as prudent or a mistake. To comment is to interfere in the most sensitive of matters such as family dynamics and succession that would inevitably align him against one faction, making him a target. Neutral observation is the safe policy.

302 [adm.]

**Hatthārohe anikaṭṭhe rathike pattikārake
tesaṃ kammāvadānena rājā vaḍḍheti vetanaṃ,
na tesaṃ antarā gacche—sa rājavasaṭim vase.**

(If) the king increases the pay of mahouts, bodyguards,
charioteers and foot-soldiers because of hearing of their
exploits, he should not get between them—(then) he may dwell
in the king's residence.

When the king decides to increase the pay of his key forces— mahouts,
bodyguards, charioteers, foot-soldiers—based on their merit, the
courtier must not get in between them. He should not lobby for
different individuals, question the amounts, or try to take credit. To
insert himself into this transaction would alienate both the king, whose
prerogative it is, and the soldiers, who might see him as an obstacle. The
military's loyalty is to the king alone, and the courtier must not muddy
those waters.

**Cāpo v' ūnūdarō c' assa,⁷⁶ vaṃso vāpi pakampaye,
paṭilomaṃ na vatteyya—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

He should not have a large belly like an arch, or shake like bamboo, he should not go against the grain—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

A courtier should not have a large, protruding belly like an arch or a strung bow, as this suggests gluttony, laziness and lack of self-discipline. He should not shake or quiver like bamboo in the wind, as this indicates nervousness, indecision and a lack of steadfastness. Furthermore, he must not go against the grain, meaning he should not be oppositional or contrarian. His physique and demeanor should project control, stability and compliance.

⁷⁶ Ja: *cāpo v' ūnūdarō dhiro*; the steadfast one should not have a large belly...

**Cāpo v' ūnūdarō c' assa, maccho v' assa ajivhavā,
appāsī nipako sūro—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

He should not have a large belly like an arch, like a fish he
should be without a tongue, eating little, discerning,
courageous—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

Repeating the warning against a large belly, it adds that the courtier
should be discreet, not gossiping or speaking out of turn. He should eat
little, demonstrating restraint. He must be discerning in judgment and
courageous in action when required. This combination of being lean,
quiet, moderate, wise and brave paints the picture of the perfect
servant: ascetic in habits, trustworthy in speech, sharp in mind and firm
in duty.

**Na bālham itthim gaccheyya, sampassam tejasāṅkham,
kāsam sāsam thaddhābalaṃ⁷⁷ khīṇamedho nigacchati.⁷⁸**

The one whose intelligence is weak should not go to a woman excessively, seeing that he suffers the destruction of strength, cough, asthma, paralysis and weakness.

A courtier who is weak and consorts with a woman too much will likely suffer the destruction of his manly strength. The verse lists the physical consequences: cough, asthma, paralysis and general weakness. More broadly, it implies the depletion of vital energy. For a courtier whose value lies in his mental and physical vigor, such dissipation is professional suicide, rendering him feeble and useless.

⁷⁷ Ja: *daram balyam*; anguish and strength? It doesn't make sense in context. Maybe *balyam* = *bālyam*, weakness, here?

⁷⁸ We need to bring the subject to the beginning of the verse; in prose order: *Khīṇamedho itthim na bālham gaccheyya, sampassam tejasāṅkham kāsam sāsam thaddhābalaṃ nigacchati.*

**Nātivelam̐ pabhāseyya, na tuṅhī sabbadā siyā,
avikiṇṇam̐ mitam̐ vācam̐ patte kāle udīraye.**

He should not speak too long, nor be silent all the time, he should speak measured and concise words when the time has come.

A courtier must avoid two extremes: he should not speak for too long, as that exaggerates his own importance and long-windedness might bore the king and waste time. Conversely, he should not be silent all the time, as constant silence suggests dullness, disapproval or secretiveness. The ideal is to utter speech that is measured, clear and coherent and only when the time is right. His words should be few, valuable and well-timed. This is the middle path applied to communication.

**Akodhano asaṅghaṭṭo sacco saṅho apesuṇo,
samphaṁ giraṁ na bhāseyya—sa rājavasatiṁ vase.**

Free from anger, inoffensive, truthful, gentle, not slanderous,
he should not speak foolish words—(then) he may dwell in the
king's residence.

He must be free from anger, as anger clouds judgment and provokes conflict. He should be inoffensive, avoiding harshness that creates enemies. Truthfulness is essential for trust. Gentleness makes him approachable. He must not be slanderous, as a divider of people is a danger to the court. Finally, he must not speak foolish words. His speech should build harmony and convey reliability, not stir trouble or display folly.

308 [adm.]

**Mātā pitu bharo⁷⁹ assa, kule jeṭṭhāpacāyiko,
hiri-ottappasampanno—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

He should be a supporter of his mother and father, respectful to elders in the family, endowed with conscience and concern—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

He should be a supporter of his mother and father, fulfilling his filial duties. He must be respectful to elders in his own family. These are signs of a fundamentally good character, one that understands hierarchy, duty, and gratitude. Furthermore, he must be endowed with conscience and concern—the inner shame that prevents bad deeds and the concern about their consequences. A man who is dishonourable at home cannot be truly honourable at court.

⁷⁹ Ja: *mātā bhittibharo*? wall support? perhaps it means: strong support?

**Vinīto sippavā danto yatatto⁸⁰ niyato mudu
appamatto suci dakkho—sa rājasatiṃ vase.**

(When) disciplined, skilled, tamed, self-controlled, restrained,
gentle, heedful, pure, capable—(then) he may dwell in the
king's residence.

He should be well-trained and disciplined. He is skilled in his arts. He is tamed and self-controlled. He is collected and restrained. He is gentle in manner. He is heedful and vigilant. He is pure in conduct. He is capable in execution. This list moves from inner training to outer skill, from self-mastery to gentle interaction, from mental vigilance to effective action. It describes a human instrument perfectly honed for service.

⁸⁰ Ja: *Katatto*, performance?

310 [adm.]

**Nivātavutti vuḍḍhesu sappatisso sagāraṇo,
sūrato sukhasaṇvāso—sa rājavasaṭṭim vase.**

(When) humble, polite and respectful towards the elderly,
mild, easy to live with—(then) he may dwell in the king's
residence.

He should be humble and unobtrusive, polite, deferential and respectful towards the elderly and senior officials. He should be mild, not aggressive or harsh. Ultimately, he should be easy to live with, creating no friction or drama. A courtier who embodies these traits is not just competent but also a soothing, stabilising presence in the high-stress environment of the palace, valued for his peaceable nature as much as for his skill.

**Ārakā parivajjeyya saññitum pahitaṃ janaṃ,
bhattāram-ev' udikkheyya, na ca aññassa rājino.**

He should avoid from afar anyone sent to spy,⁸¹ he should look
only to his master, not to another king.

The courtier must be security-conscious, avoiding from afar, or keeping at bay, anyone sent to spy from rival courts. His political focus must be singular: he should look only to his master, serving his king's interests alone. He must not look to another king, meaning he should not cultivate connections, seek patronage, or even appear interested in alternative rulers. Any trace of divided allegiance is potentially treasonous. His eyes, ears, and political calculations must be focused on one sovereign.

⁸¹ Or maybe: he should keep far away anyone sent to spy. The word *parivajjeyya* allows for both meanings. *Saññitum* in this meaning is difficult, the Jātaka reading: *sahitum*, equally so, the translation is guided by the commentary.

**Samaṇe Brahmaṇe cāpi sīlavante bahussute
sakkaccaṃ payirūpāse, annapānena tappayye,
āsajja pañhe puccheyya, ākaṅkhaṃ vuḍḍhim-attano.⁸²**

He should respectfully attend on ascetics, Brahmins, the
virtuous and learned, he should satisfy them with food and
drinks, having approached he should ask them questions,
seeking his own advancement.

He should respectfully attend on ascetics, Brahmins, and those who are
virtuous and very learned. He should satisfy them with food and drink,
performing the layman's duty of almsgiving. Crucially, he should
approach them to ask questions. This is not mere charity but an active
seeking of his own advancement through spiritual growth, practical
wisdom and the merit that secures his future. Association with the wise
elevates his own standing and insight.

⁸² This verse summarises four verses found in the Jātaka.

**Dinnapubbaṃ na hāpeyya dānaṃ samaṇabrahmaṇe,
na ca kiñci nivāreyya dānakāle vaṇibbake.**

He should not neglect gifts that were previously given to ascetics and Brahmins, he should not hold back anything at a time of giving to mendicants.

The courtier should not neglect gifts that were previously given to ascetics and Brahmins. This means he should continue supporting holy persons and institutions the king or his family has traditionally aided, maintaining those righteous relationships. Furthermore, at the time for giving to mendicants, he should hold back nothing appropriate to give.

Stinginess towards the spiritually worthy is a sign of poor character, whereas steady, open-handed generosity is a mark of nobility and builds a reservoir of public good will and merit.

**Paññavā⁸³ buddhisampanno vidhānavidhikovidō,
kālaññū samayaññū ca—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

(When) wise, endowed with intelligence, skilled in arranging
and performance, knowing the time and knowing the
occasion—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

He must be wise, possessing deep understanding. He must be endowed with intelligence, meaning sharp, analytical discernment. He must be skilled in arrangement and performance, a master of logistics and execution. Most importantly, he must be one who knows the time and knows the occasion. This is the pinnacle of political wisdom: the intuitive sense of when to act, when to speak, when to wait. All his other skills are useless without this supreme talent for timing.

⁸³ Ja: *paññavā*, meritorious.

**Uṭṭhātā kammadheyyesu appamatto vicakkhaṇo,
susaṁvihitakammanto—sa rājavasatiṁ vase.**

(When) he has initiative in assigning work, is heedful,
discerning, with his work well-arranged—(then) he may dwell
in the king's residence.

He must be one with initiative, not waiting to be told but identifying what needs to be done, especially in assigning work. He must remain heedful, never negligent. He must be discerning in judging people and situations. As a result, his work is well-arranged: organised, efficient, and producing excellent results. He is not a passive functionary but an energetic, intelligent and meticulous administrator who anticipates needs and ensures the smooth functioning of the kingdom's business.

**Khalam̐ sālām̐ pasum̐ khettaṁ, gantā c' assa abhikkhaṇam̐,
mitam̐ dhaññaṁ nidhāpeyya, mitañ-ca pācaye ghare.**

Going frequently to his fields, animals, stables and granaries,
one should store a measure of grain, and cook a measure in the
house.

The wise courtier must manage his personal estates with the same prudence required for statecraft. He should go frequently to inspect his fields, threshing floors, livestock, and granaries. This hands-on oversight prevents loss through theft or neglect. He should store a measured portion of grain for future security and cook a measured portion in the house for current consumption. This balance ensures his personal household is resilient, self-sufficient, and free from want, which would undermine his position and integrity at court.

317 [adm.]

**Puttaṃ vā bhātaraṃ vā pi⁸⁴ sīlesu asamāhitaṃ,
anaṅgavā hi te bālā, yathā petā tatheva te,
coḷañ-ca n' esaṃ piṇḍañ-ca, āsanañ-ca padāpaye.⁸⁵**

A child or brother not firm in virtue, these fools are without substance,⁸⁶ they are like the dead, one should not give them a cloth, alms or a seat.

If a courtier's own child or brother is not firm in virtue, that person is a fool. Such individuals are without substance, they are crippled morally and socially. They are like the dead to the courtier's duty and reputation. Therefore, he should not give them a cloth, alms, or a seat of honour. To support and enable them is to associate with their vice, which would stain his own character and credibility. Loyalty to family is overridden by the higher duty to virtue and one's professional standing.

⁸⁴ Ja: *saṃ vā?*

⁸⁵ In the Jātaka this last *pādayuga* reads: *coḷañ-ca n' esaṃ piṇḍañ-ca, āsīnānaṃ va dāpaye*, and the comm. says: for sons and brothers who have come and sat down, who are as good as dead (*matasattānaṃ*), one should cause to be given only mere food and clothing, just as one gives a funeral feast to the dead. That changes the meaning considerably.

⁸⁶ Lit: without a limb or without a body.

**Dāse kammakare pose⁸⁷ sīlesu susamāhite
dakkhe uṭṭhānasampanne āhipaccamhi ṭhāpaye.**

He should place in a position of authority servants, workers
and dependants who are firm in virtue, skilful and endowed
with initiative.

In managing his own affairs or those delegated by the king, the courtier
should place in positions of authority those who are firm in virtue,
skilful, and endowed with initiative. This applies to servants, workers,
and anyone else who depends on him. Meritocracy based on ethics,
competence and drive ensures efficient and honest administration.

Promoting the virtuous and capable, regardless of their birth,
strengthens the entire structure the courtier is responsible for and
reflects his own good judgment.

⁸⁷ Ja: *pesse*, messengers.

319 [adm.]

**Sīlavā ca alobho ca,⁸⁸ anuratto⁸⁹ ca rājino,
āvī raho hito c' assa⁹⁰—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

(When) virtuous, greedless, devoted to the king, open in private and beneficial to him—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

He must be, first of all, virtuous, as a corrupt man is a liability. He should be free from greed, as avarice leads to treason. He must be devoted to the king, with heartfelt loyalty. In private counsel, he must be open and truthful, not deceitful. All his actions must be beneficial to the king. This combination of personal morality, detachment, devotion, honesty and utilitarian value defines the perfect servant: a man the king can trust with his secrets, his wealth and his realm.

⁸⁸ Ja: *alolo ca*, not covetous.

⁸⁹ Text reads: *anurutta*, which seems to be a mistake.

⁹⁰ Ja: *avīraho hito tassa*, DP marks this as a wrong reading for *āvī raho*, as here.

**Chandaññū rājino assa cittaṭṭho, sayarājino⁹¹
asaṅkusakavuttissa—sa rājivasatiṃ vase.**

He should be one who knows the intention established in the king's mind, and not behave contrary to one's king—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

He must be one who knows the king's intentions, and understand the king's unspoken wishes, moods, inclinations and fears. With this understanding, his own behavior must not be contrary to his king's will. He must not work at cross-purposes or pursue a personal agenda. He aligns his actions seamlessly with the royal consciousness. This goes beyond obedience to a kind of empathetic anticipation, making him an extension of the king's own will, the perfect instrument who acts because he understands, not just because he is commanded.

⁹¹ Ja: *c' assa rājino*, his king.

**Ucchādaye nhāpane ca dhove pāde adhosiraṃ,
āhato pi na kuppeyya—sa rājavasatiṃ vase.**

With the head down while massaging, bathing and washing the feet, he should not be angry even if beaten—(then) he may dwell in the king's residence.

While performing intimate, servile tasks for the king, such as massaging, bathing or washing the king's feet, the courtier must keep his head lowered, a posture of utter submission. Even in this vulnerable position, if he is beaten by the king in a moment of anger or caprice, he must not become angry. This is the ultimate test of self-control and dedication. It transforms service into a discipline of the mind, where personal dignity is utterly subsumed by loyalty, and reaction to injustice is suppressed for the sake of survival and duty.

322–323 [adm.]

**Kumbhaṃ p' añjaliṃ kariyā, cātañ-cāpi padakkhiṇaṃ,
kim-eva sabbakāmānaṃ dātāraṃ dhīraṃ-uttamaṃ,
yo deti sayanaṃ vatthaṃ yānaṃ āvasathaṃ gharaṃ,
pajjunno-r-iva bhūtānaṃ bhogehi abhivassati.**

He should salute a pot, or circumambulate a bird,⁹² not to mention the supremely steadfast one, the giver of all desires, the one who gives a bed, cloth, a vehicle, a dwelling, a house and who rains down upon beings with property like a rain-cloud.

A person should salute even a mere pot or circumambulate a bird, acts of reverence toward insignificant objects. The rhetorical conclusion is: if one shows such respect to trivial things, how much more should one honour the king? The king is described as the supremely steadfast one and the giver of all desires. He is the source of all security, wealth, and status. The courtier's reverence must be proportionally absolute, surpassing all other respects.

⁹² Perhaps this is a short form of *cātaka*, a hornbill.

23. Dukādimissako A Mixture of Pairs and So On (11 Verses)

324 [stm.]

**Dve v' ime kaṇḍakā tikkhā sarīraparisositā:
kāmeti niddhano yo ca yo ca kuppatty-anissaro.**

These two sharp thorns make the body wither: the one who has
desires while poor and the one who gets angry while
powerless.

This verse identifies two specific and deeply painful contradictions that corrode a person from within. The first is the poor person who is filled with strong desires. His material reality cannot meet his aspirations, leading to constant frustration, envy, and a sense of lack that withers his spirit. The second is the powerless person who is quick to anger. His rage has no effective outlet or force behind it, leaving him seething impotently, which consumes his inner peace.

**Adhanassa 'rasam⁹³ khādā, abalassa hatāhatā,
apaññassa kathā vākyā—tividham hīnalakkhaṇam.**

For the poor unsavoury food, for the weak blow after blow,
for the one lacking wisdom arguments and words—(this) is the
threefold mark of a low person.

First, he gives unsavoury or rotten food to the poor, exploiting their desperation and adding insult to their poverty. Second, he strikes blow after blow on the weak, bullying those who cannot fight back, taking cowardly pleasure in their vulnerability. Third, he directs argumentative, quarrelsome words at one lacking wisdom, engaging in futile debate to confuse, dominate, or humiliate someone unable to argue effectively. This reveals a character that seeks advantage through preying on the disadvantaged.

⁹³ Text reads: *rasam*, which makes no sense in the context.

**Pathabyā madhurā tīṇi: ucchu nārī subhāsitaṃ;
ucchunārīsu tappanti, na tappanti subhāsite.**

Three sweet on things on earth: sugarcane, a woman and well-spoken words; they are sated with sugarcane and women, (but) they are not sated with well-spoken words.

Sugarcane, a woman, and well-spoken words are all sweet. However, people can reach a point of satiety with sugarcane and sensual pleasure; one can eat enough sugar or experience enough pleasure to be temporarily satisfied. But one is never satisfied with well-spoken, wise, or beautiful words. The ear and the mind have an infinite capacity and hunger for eloquent, truthful and beneficial speech. This highlights the superior and enduring value of Dhamma and good counsel over mere sensual delights.

**Pathabyā tīṇi ratanāni saṅgahāni mahītale:
sippan̄ dhaññāñ-ca mittañ-ca, bhavanti ratanā ime.**

There are three treasures supported upon the surface of the earth: craft, grain and friends, these are three treasures.

These are not jewels or gold, but functional assets: a craft or skill, which provides livelihood and purpose; grain, representing stored food and economic security; and friends, meaning true companions who provide support, advice, and protection. These three are supported upon the surface of the earth because they are the tangible foundations of a stable and flourishing human existence. Unlike fleeting riches, these treasures: competence, sustenance and companionship directly address fundamental human needs.

**Kalyāṇamittaṃ kantāraṃ yuddhaṃ sabhāyaṃ bhāsitaṃ
asatthā gantum-icchanti mūḷhā te caturo janā.**

There are four foolish people: those who wish to go
unequipped to a spiritual friend, a desert, a war and to speak
in an assembly.

To go unequipped to a spiritual friend means to approach a wise teacher without humility, questions, or a receptive mind, gaining nothing. To go unequipped into a desert means without water, supplies, or a guide, ensuring death. To go unequipped to war means without weapons or armor, guaranteeing defeat. To go unequipped to speak in an assembly means without prepared knowledge, eloquence, or confidence, leading to ridicule. In each case, the specific equipment is essential for success or survival.

**Jīvanto pi matā pañca—Byāsenā parikittitā—
dukkhito byādhito pakkho ṇavā nityasevako.**

Five are as dead even while alive—this was expounded by
Byāsa—one suffering, one ill, the partisan, the debtor and the
perpetual slave.

One suffering from profound grief is dead to joy. One ill with chronic disease is dead to health and vitality. The partisan, hopelessly indebted, is dead to financial freedom and autonomy. The perpetual slave, with no control over his life or time, is dead to liberty and self-determination. Though their hearts beat, the essential qualities of a fully human life which are well-being, autonomy, and freedom from crushing burden are absent. They exist in a living death, a state of profound deprivation that negates the potential of life.

**Cakkhudvārādikam chakkaṃ saṃvuto sapañño naro
chabbidho hoti sīlena, asīlenāpi chabbidho.**

The wise person restrained through virtue in six ways
beginning with the eye-door is sixfold, also through lack of
virtue he is sixfold.

A wise person who is restrained in the six sense-doors through virtue becomes sixfold in a positive sense—fully integrated, with each sense faculty guarded and used rightly. Conversely, through lack of virtue, he also becomes sixfold, but in a negative sense: fragmented, with each sense door a gateway to defilement, leading to diverse kinds of suffering. The same human apparatus yields either a unified, noble character or a dispersed, base one, depending entirely on the application of ethical discipline.

**Niddāluko pamādo ca sukhito rogavālaso
nicchando ca kammārāmo—sattete satthavajjitā.**

The sleepy, the heedless, the comfortable, the sickly, the lazy,
those without aspiration and those delighting in work—these
seven are shunned by the teacher.⁹⁴

The sleepy, the heedless and the lazy lack the basic alertness and effort for learning. The comfortable one is too attached to ease to endure the effort of practice. The sickly lacks physical vitality. One without aspiration lacks the driving desire to understand. One delighting only in work is preoccupied with busyness, not reflection. These are not moral condemnations but practical diagnoses: such individuals lack the prerequisites necessary to benefit from spiritual instruction.

⁹⁴ *Sattha* is one of the most ambiguous terms in Pāḷi, differentiated in Sanskrit as: *śāstrī* (a teacher), *śāstra* (science, lore also a text or commentary), *śastra* (a weapon) and *sārtha*, a caravan. Here it could also mean that these are shunned in the texts, but considering its context and the verse that follows the correct interpretation seems to be as I have it.

**Kulajo paññavā chando hirottappo sutādharo
atthakāmo surakkho ca—aṭṭh' ete satthayojitā.**

The well-born, the wise, the aspiring, the conscientious, the concerned, the learned, the one desiring good and the one well-guarded—these eight are engaged with by the teacher.

Well-born suggests good upbringing and manners. Wise indicates innate understanding. Aspiring shows motivation. Conscience and concern are the inner guardians of morality. Learned means they have a foundation of knowledge. One desiring good seeks genuine welfare, not just information. One well-guarded has self-control. Possessing these qualities, a student is a worthy vessel for the highest teaching, capable of receiving, retaining and applying it.

**Kulaseṭṭho sapañño ca vuḍḍhi sūro ca sīlavā
bahussuto vuṭṭhāno ca dhīro sugatigāmiko—
nav’ ete sujanā seṭṭhā, pāpāttānaṃ nivāraye.**

One of a rich family, one having wisdom, one prosperous, one courageous, one having virtue, one learned, one upstanding, one steadfast, one going to a good destiny—these nine good people are leaders, they hold back wrong in themselves.

These are the nine attributes of the highest type of person, the natural leaders who restrain wrong within themselves. These individuals are leaders not merely by birth but by their composite virtue. Their key function is internal: they hold back wrong in themselves. Their leadership and goodness stem from this capacity for self-governance. They are pillars of society because they have first mastered their own nature and are headed for prosperity.

334 [adm.]

**Buddho Paccekabuddho ca Arahā aggasāvako
mātā pitā garu satthā dāyako dhammadesako—
paṇḍite hi ime dasa na dubbhantī ti jāniyā.**

The Buddha, the Independent Buddha, the Arahāt, the chief
disciple, mother, father, instructor, teacher, benefactor, the
teacher of Dhamma—these ten do not deceive, they should be
known as wise people.

These are the ten figures who embody perfect reliability and wisdom.
These ten do not deceive or lead astray. Their guidance, protection, or
instruction is always trustworthy and for the true benefit of others.

They should be known as wise. This set spans the ultimate spiritual
guides and the foundational worldly benefactors, acknowledging that
true wisdom and trustworthy care manifest in both the transcendent and
the familial spheres.

24. Pakiṇṇako Miscellaneous (55 Verses)

335 [rh.q.]

**Dhammatthakāmamokkhānaṃ pāṇo saṃsiddhikāraṇaṃ,
taṃ nighatā kiṃ na hataṃ? Rakkhitā kiṃ na rakkhataṃ?**

Life is the means of accomplishment for Dhamma, prosperity,
love and liberation,⁹⁵ one who kills it, how is he not a slayer?

One who protects it, how is he not a protector?

Physical life is the essential vessel, the very means of accomplishment, for any being who desires the four goals: Dhamma, worldly benefit or prosperity, love or sensual satisfaction and final liberation. To destroy this vessel is to destroy all potential for good. It frames the taking and preserving of life as absolute moral categories. To kill any being is to destroy its path to awakening; to protect life is to safeguard that sacred possibility. It presents a profound argument for non-violence based on the supreme value of life.

⁹⁵ These are the four aims of life in traditional Indian philosophy, known as the *puruṣārthā*: *Dhamma*, *Attha*, *Kāma* and eventually *Mokkha* (Sanskrit: *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma*, and *Mokṣa*).

**Sataṃ dīghāyuko sabbasattānaṃ sukhakāraṇaṃ,
asataṃ pana sabbesaṃ dukkhahetu na saṃsayo.**

The long life of the good is a cause of happiness for all beings,
but the long life of the bad is no doubt a cause of suffering on
all sides.

Their prolonged presence of the good provides sustained guidance,
generosity and stability. Conversely, the long life of a bad person is,
without doubt, a cause of suffering on all sides. Their extended
influence means more harm, corruption and strife. Longevity,
therefore, is not an intrinsic good; its value is entirely dependent on the
virtue of the person who possesses it. A short life of goodness may be
preferable to a long life of vice.

337–338 [rh.q.]

**Yantagato ucchu rasam na jahāti; gajo tathā
saṅgāmesu gato liḷam; sussutenāpi candanam
sāragandham na jahāti; dukkhatto pi paṇḍito
na jahāti satam Dhammam, sukhakāle kathā va kā?**

Sugarcane under the press does not lose its taste; likewise an elephant gone to battle does not lose its grace; even when dried sandalwood does not lose its perfume; even when afflicted a wise person does not abandon the Dhamma of the good, what do say during a time of prosperity?

Sugarcane, even when crushed in a press, does not lose its sweet flavour.

An elephant, even when entering the chaos of battle, does not lose its inherent grace and power. Sandalwood, even when dried and powdered, does not lose its fragrant perfume. Similarly, a wise person, even when afflicted by suffering, does not abandon his good conduct. His virtue is intrinsic, not conditional. The concluding question underscores that if he holds firm in adversity, his virtue in times of ease is a given. True character is revealed and proven under pressure.

**Attā bandhu manussānaṃ, ripu attā va jantunaṃ,
attā va niyato ñāti, attā va 'niyato⁹⁶ ripu.**

The self is the people's kin, the self is humanity's enemy, the
self restrained is kin, the self unrestrained is an enemy.

The self is the people's kin because it is your most intimate companion through life. Yet, the self is also humanity's enemy for when it is dominated by craving, hatred, and delusion, it leads to ruin. The distinction lies in discipline: the self, when restrained, becomes a true relative, a guide and protector. The self, when unrestrained, becomes a relentless enemy. Therefore, the primary relationship is not with others, but with oneself. Victory over the inner enemy is the prerequisite for all other success and happiness.

⁹⁶ Text: *niyato*, which hardly makes sense, what is implied is a contrast.

**Attānaṃ pariccāgena yaṃ nissitānurakkhaṇaṃ
karonti sajjanā yeva, na taṃ nīmatāmetaṃ.**

By self-sacrifice good people give protection to those depending on them, (but) that is not the opinion of the politically wise.⁹⁷

Good people, especially in Buddhist circles, were seen to operate on a principle of self-sacrifice. To protect and support those who depend on them, they are willing to give up their own comfort, wealth or safety. This is the ethic of compassion and duty. However, that this is not the opinion of the politically wise, because statecraft often advocates pragmatism, sometimes at the expense of doing good. The verse presents the tension between pure moral goodness and the calculated wisdom of governance.

⁹⁷ This is a difficult verse, but it probably means that those wise in the way of the world do not agree with the sentiment of the first half of the verse.

**Satthakabbavicārena kālo gacchati dhīmatam,
byasanena asādhūnam niddāya kalahena vā.**

For the wise time passes with enquiring into poetry and the texts, for the bad it passes in misfortune, sleep or quarreling.

For the wise, time passes purposefully with enquiring into poetry and the Dhamma. They fill their hours with the study of literature, religion and philosophy which are activities that refine the mind and accumulate wisdom. For fools, time is wasted in empty or painful pursuits: in misfortune they brood, in sleep they are inert, in quarrelling they create strife. Time itself is neutral; its value is determined by the quality of attention and activity one brings to it. A life is measured not by years, but by the content of its moments.

**Bhamarā puppham-icchanti, pūtim-icchanti makkhikā,
sujanā guṇam-icchanti, dosam-icchanti dujjanā.**

**Bees wish for flowers, flies wish for pus, good people wish for
virtue, bad people wish for faults.**

Bees, by their nature, seek out and are drawn to flowers which are sources of fragrance, nectar and nourishment. Flies, by their nature, seek out and are drawn to pus and filth which are filled with decay and corruption. Similarly, good people instinctively seek virtue in others, appreciating goodness and aiming to cultivate it. Bad people instinctively look for faults, focusing on flaws, spreading criticism and taking pleasure in others' failings. Our focus reveals our character; what we seek, that we become.

**Namanti phalino rukkhā, namati vibudhā janā,
sukkhakaṭṭhañ-ca muḷho ca bhijjante na namanti ca.**

Fruit trees are flexible, wise people are (also) flexible, but dry wood and fools are not flexible, (instead) they break apart.

Fruit-laden trees bend under their own bounty; their flexibility prevents them from breaking. Wise people similarly possess mental and emotional flexibility, they can adapt or yield in non-essential matters, and absorb pressure without fracturing. In contrast, dry wood and fools are rigid and inflexible. Lacking life-giving sap, they cannot adapt. When faced with force or opposition, they do not yield; instead, they break apart. Rigidity is a prelude to destruction; suppleness is a sign of strength and life.

**Sace santo vivadanti khippaṃ sandhiyare puna,
bālāpattā va bhijjanti, na te samatham-āgamuṃ.**

**If the good argue, they are quickly reconciled again, (but)
fools break apart, they do not come to a settlement.**

If good people argue, they may disagree, but they do so with a foundation of mutual respect and a shared desire for resolution.

Therefore, they are quickly reconciled again. Their conflict is temporary and functional. Fools, however, once a dispute arises, break apart. Their arguments, rooted in pride and spite, sever relationships permanently. They do not come to a settlement because winning is more important than harmony. The mark of goodness is not the absence of conflict, but the capacity for repair.

345 [sim., stm.]

**Appam-pi sād̥hūnaṃ dhanam̐ kūpavāri va nissayo,
bahukaṃ pi asād̥hūnaṃ na ca vāri va aṇṇave.**

For the good even a little weath, like water in a well, is a support, but for the bad even abundant wealth, like water in an ocean, is not a support.

For good people, even a little wealth is like water in a well. It is contained, sufficient and a reliable support for their needs. They are content and manage it wisely. For bad people, even abundant wealth is like water in the ocean. Vast as it is, it is not enough; it cannot quench their boundless greed and desire for more. The ocean of wealth only makes them thirstier. Satisfaction comes not from the amount possessed, but from the character of the possessor.

**Sokaṭṭhānasahassāni bhayaṭṭhānasatāni ca
divase divase mūlham, āvīsanti na paṇḍitaṃ.**

Day by day the fool has thousands of causes of grief, and
hundreds of causes of fear, (but) these do not take hold of the
wise one.

Day by day, the mind of the fool is assailed by thousands of causes of grief and hundreds of causes of fear. He perceives threats and sorrows everywhere, magnifying small problems and anticipating disasters. Yet these same potential troubles do not take hold of the wise one. The wise person, through understanding, equanimity and right view, does not allow such mental proliferations to arise or dominate. The difference is not in external circumstances, but in the mind's reaction to them.

**Duṭṭhacittopanāhissa kodho pāsānalikhito,
kujjhitabbe sujanassa jale lekhāciraṭṭhitā.**

The anger of one resentful and corrupt in mind is written in stone, (but) for the good person should there be anger it does not endure for long, (as though) written in water.

The anger of a resentful, corrupt person is like writing engraved in stone. It is hard, permanent, and lasting; they cling to grudges, nourishing them over time. However, for a good person, even if anger should arise, it is like writing on water. The impression is momentary; it leaves no trace and does not endure. Their goodwill quickly reasserts itself, and they forgive and forget. Character is judged not by the absence of initial emotion, but by its impermanence and lack of residue.

**Niddāluko asantuṭṭho akataññū ca bhīruko—
sakkonti na samācāraṃ sikkhituṃ te kadāci pi.**

*The sleepy, the dissatisfied, the ungrateful and the cowardly—
none of these are able to learn good conduct.*

The sleepy one lacks the alertness and energy required. The dissatisfied one is perpetually craving something else, unable to appreciate and work with the present. The ungrateful one fails to recognise the kindness of teachers and benefactors, breaking the essential bond for learning. The cowardly one is paralyzed by fear, unable to face the challenges or renunciations the path requires. People dominated by these traits lack the foundational qualities of a student: vitality, contentment, gratitude and courage.

**Sādhuttaṁ sujanasamāgamā khalānaṁ,
sādhūnaṁ na khalasamāgamā khalattaṁ—
āmodaṁ kusumabhavaṁ dadhāti bhūmi,
bhūgandhaṁ na ca kusumāni dhārayanti.**

For the malicious goodness comes from association with good people, maliciousness comes from association with the malicious, not with the good—the earth holds the fragrance of flowers, but flowers do not carry the scent of the earth.

First, for the malicious, goodness comes from association with good people. A bad person can be improved by the company of the virtuous. Conversely, maliciousness comes from association with the malicious, not the good. Hostility is reinforced by hostile company, not with good company. The good person uplifts others with their virtue, but they are not contaminated by the base qualities of those around them. Influence flows from the good character which is stronger to the weaker, just as purity imparts fragrance without absorbing the scent of the earth.

**Guṇam-addisamaṃ makkhe, parena kalahe sati,
addisamaṃ pakāseṇti aṇumattaṃ pi dosakaṃ.**

*In a detractor virtue goes unseen, (but) when there is a quarrel
with another, they reveal even the tiniest unseen fault.*

When a fault-finder observes someone with virtue, they are blind to it; it remains unseen, as if it did not exist. However, if that virtuous person becomes embroiled in a quarrel with another, the detractor seizes the opportunity. Their attention sharpens malignantly, and they eagerly reveal even the tiniest fault, magnifying minor flaws. This reveals a corrupt mindset: incapable of appreciating good qualities, it is attuned to failures, especially when they can be used to diminish someone during conflict. Their vision is calibrated and sees only the bad.

**Dosaṁ parassa passanti, attadosaṁ na passati,
tilamattaṁ paradosaṁ, nāḷikeramaṁ na passati.**

They see the faults of another, (but) do not see their own faults, they see another's sesame-sized fault, (but) do not see (their own) coconut-sized faults.

Bad people are experts at seeing the faults of others, scrutinising them in detail. Yet, they are strikingly blind to their own faults, which often loom larger. They can spot a sesame-seed-sized fault in another, but fail to see a coconut-sized fault in themselves. This highlights a profound lack of self-awareness and introspection. The mind's critical faculty is turned outward, protecting the ego from uncomfortable truths while judging others with harsh precision.

**Kodho atthaṃ na jānāti, kuddho dhammaṃ na passati,
andhatamaṃ tadā hoti yaṃ kodho sahate naraṃ.**

One angry does not know what is beneficial, one angered does not see the truth, when anger overcomes a person there is the greatest blindness.

When a person is in the grip of anger, they do not know what is beneficial; their judgment of their own and others' good is utterly corrupted. They do not see the truth; their perception of reality is warped by rage. At that moment, a great darkness descends upon them. Anger overcomes the person, meaning their rational, compassionate self is eclipsed. They become blind agents of their own defilements, acting in ways they will later regret, having lost access to wisdom and clear sight.

353 [sim., stm.]

**Kodho abbhantare jāto, dhuvam̐ nāseti kodhanam̐,
vatthālaṅkārapuṇṇāyam̐ mañjūsāyam̐ sikhī yathā.**

Anger, arisen within, regularly destroys the angry one, just as
a flame destroys a chest filled with clothes and trimmings.

Anger within is not primarily a threat to others but a consuming force for the one who harbors it, for sure it will destroy him. Just as a flame would utterly destroy a chest filled with clothes and trimmings, reducing it to ash, so anger burns up one's inner treasures of peace, happiness and good deeds. The arsonist and the angry person are similar; by nurturing anger, one sets fire to one's own well-being.

**Rāgo nāma manosallaṃ, guṇavarattacorako,
Rāhu vijjāsasaṅkissa, tapovanahutāsano.**

Passion is a dart in the mind, a thief of one's excellent virtue,
it is a Rāhu for the doubter of knowledge, a fire in the ascetic's
grove.

The catastrophic effects of passion are first, a dart in the mind, a painful, piercing obsession. Second, it is a thief of one's excellent virtue, robbing one of hard-earned moral integrity. Third, for one who doubts true knowledge, it is like Rāhu: the demon that swallows the sun and moon, signifying here the eclipse of wisdom. Finally, for an ascetic, it is like a fire in his grove, completely destroying the peaceful refuge of spiritual practice. Passion is thus portrayed as an inner calamity that corrupts, obscures, and devastates.

**Na titti rājā dhanena, paṇḍito pi subhāsīte,
cakkhū pi piyadassane, sāgaro pi mahājale.**

A king is not satiated with wealth, a wise one is not satiated with well-spoken words, the eyes are not satiated with pleasing sights, the ocean is not satiated with the great waters.

A king is never satiated with wealth; no matter how much he amasses, his desire for more persists. A wise person is never satiated with well-spoken words; the learning and eloquence of the Dhamma are infinitely nourishing. Eyes are never satiated with pleasing sights; the sense faculty continually seeks new visual delight. The ocean is never satiated with the great waters flowing into it, it can always absorb more. The wise person's endless thirst for good words and the ocean's boundless capacity are images of wholesome or natural abundance.

**Asantuṭṭho yati naṭṭho, santuṭṭho pi mahīpati,
salajjā gaṇikā naṭṭhā, nilajjā sukulaṅganā.**

A discontented monastic is ruined, a contented king is also ruined, courtesans having shame are ruined, shameless women from good families are ruined.

A discontented monastic is ruined because contentment is the very foundation of the renunciant life. A contented king is ruined because a ruler must be vigilant, ambitious for his kingdom's welfare, and never complacent. Courtesans having shame are ruined because their profession requires boldness and the absence of conventional modesty. Shameless women from good families are ruined because their social standing depends on propriety and honour. Success depends on embodying the virtues appropriate to one's station.

**Bhūpāṇṇav' aggi thī sippī abhijjhālu ca puggalo,
etesam pi mahicchānam mahicchiṭṭhā aniccatā.**

A king, the ocean, fire, a woman, an artisan and a covetous man, for those of great desire even their desire is in a state of impermanence.

A king desires power and territory. The ocean desires to receive all rivers. Fire desires more fuel to keep burning. A woman is thought of as always desiring more comfort. An artisan desires materials and projects. A covetous man desires possessions. The point is not just that they have great desire, but that even their state of desiring is impermanent. Desires themselves rise and fall, are fulfilled or frustrated. Nothing, not even the act of craving, is stable. This is a subtle teaching on impermanence applied to the very force of desire.

**Ārogyaṃ paramo lābho, santuṭṭhi paramaṃ dhanam,
vissāso paramo ñāti, Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ.**

Health is the supreme gain, contentment is the supreme wealth, the trustworthy one is the supreme kin, Nibbāna is the supreme happiness.

Health is the supreme gain, as all other riches are useless without it. Contentment is the supreme wealth, for it provides peace no treasure can buy. A trustworthy person is the supreme kin, more valuable than unreliable relatives. Finally, Nibbāna is the supreme happiness, surpassing all worldly pleasures. This hierarchy of values turns worldly priorities upside-down, guiding one to invest in inner qualities and the ultimate goal rather than external, transient possessions.

Duggataṃ gaccha bho lābha! Lābho lābhena pūrati.

Thale pavuṭṭha Pajjunna! Āpo āpena pūrati.

Go to the poor man, dear gain! Gain is filled up with (more) gain. Rain upon the plain Pajjuna! Let water fill up with water.

The speaker directly addresses Gain itself, personifying it as a benevolent force. The aspiration is that wealth should flow to those who need it most. The next line explains how this can happen gradually: Gain is filled up with gain. Just as a small amount of capital can attract and grow into more, the wish is for the poor person's initial, modest gains to multiply. It is like the rain from the cloud-Deva Pajjunna, falling upon the plain, which causes water to gather and fill the land bit by bit, so too may the wealth of the poor increase steadily until they are full and prosperous.

Bodhayanti na yācanti dehī ti pacchimā janā!
Passa vatthuṃ adānassa, mā bhavatū ti īdiso.

They enlighten the lesser folk, they do not beg, saying: Give!
See the example of the one who gives not, do not be like this.

These noble individuals enlighten others, offering wisdom and guidance freely. Crucially, they do not beg, demanding Give! Their dignity lies in giving, not taking. The speaker reflects on this model and utters a protective wish: See the example of the one who gives not—the miser, the beggar, the dependent. Looking at that negative example, the speaker resolves: Do not let me be like this! It is a vow to emulate the generous teacher, not the grasping taker, framing generosity as a path of both dignity and enlightenment.

**Sele sele na māṇikkam, gaje gaje na muttikam,
vane vane na candanam, ṭhāne ṭhāne na paṇḍitā.**

There is not a ruby on every mountain, there is not a pearl in every elephant, there is not sandalwood in every forest, there are not wise men in every place.

Just as a ruby is not found on every mountain, a pearl is not found in every elephant, and sandalwood is not found in every forest, so too wise people are not found in every place. Wisdom, like these precious substances, is a rare treasure that arises only under specific, favorable conditions. This serves both as a caution against expecting to find sages everywhere and as an encouragement to deeply value and seek them out when they do appear, knowing their presence is exceptional.

**Satesu jāyate sūro, sahasseṣu ca paṇḍito,
vattā satasahasṣeṣu, cāgī bhavati vā na vā.**

Amongst a hundred, one hero arises, amongst a thousand, a wise person, amongst a hundred thousand, an orator, but a charitable person may and may not be found.

A hero, while exceptional, can be found as rarely as one in a hundred. A wise person is far rarer, found perhaps one in a thousand. An orator, a master of speech, is rarer still: just one in a hundred thousand. But the rarest of all is a truly charitable person, one who gives with a pure heart. Such a person may or may not be found; they are the pinnacle of human virtue, so scarce that their existence cannot be statistically assumed. True generosity is presented as the ultimate, most uncommon attainment.

**Jinena āgataṃ sūraṃ, dhanañ-ca geham-āgataṃ,
jiṇṇaṃ annaṃ paṣaṃseyya, dārañ-ca gatayobbanāṃ.**

One should praise the hero who returns from victory, the wealth that came to the home, food (even if) stale, and a wife (even if) past her youth.

One should praise the hero who returns from victory, for his success brings security. One should praise the wealth that has come into the home, for it provides sustenance and stability, even if it is not vast. One should praise food, even if stale, for it wards off hunger and supports life. One should praise a wife, even past her youth, for her loyalty, experience and partnership are enduring virtues. This is a teaching that values what is functional and present over what is ideal or flawless.

**Potthakesu ca yaṃ sippaṃ, parahaṭṭhesu yaṃ dhaṇaṃ,
yathā kicce samuppanne na taṃ sippaṃ na taṃ dhaṇaṃ.**

That skill which is (only) in the books, that wealth which is in others' hands, when a need arises that is not a skill, that is not wealth.

A skill that exists only in books is merely theoretical knowledge, not a mastered craft. Wealth that is in others' hands is not at one's disposal. The test comes when a need arises. At that critical moment, the book-knowledge cannot be applied, and the others' wealth cannot be accessed. Therefore, that is not a true skill, it is not real wealth. Value is defined by availability and utility in times of necessity. What you cannot use when needed, you effectively do not have.

**Vācāvudhā ca rājāno, saccāvudhā ca samaṇā,
dhanāvudhā seṭṭhino ca, goṇāvudhā daliddakā.**

**Kings are armed with words, ascetics are armed with truth,
merchants are armed with wealth, the poor are armed with
oxen.**

Kings are armed with words: their power lies in command, diplomacy, law and proclamation. Ascetics are armed with truth: their strength is their adherence to and teaching of ultimate truth, which is their authority and protection. Merchants are armed with wealth: their capital is their tool for trade, influence and security. The poor are armed with oxen: their draft animals are their essential means of labor, transportation and agricultural survival. Each group's armament is the fundamental resource for its survival.

**Ukkaṭṭhe sūram-icchanti, kolāhalesu bhāsitaṃ,
piyañ-ca annapānamhi, atthakiccesu paṇḍitaṃ.**

**In battle they wish for a hero, in commotion for clarity, in
food and drink for a friend, in business for one wise.**

In battle, one wishes for a hero because courage and martial skill are paramount. In a commotion or uproar, one wishes for clarity of speech, for someone who can cut through chaos with reason and clear direction.

In matters of food and drink, one wishes for a beloved friend for companionship enhances the simple pleasure of a meal. In business or important affairs, one wishes for a wise person, someone whose counsel ensures correct decisions and success. Different challenges require different kinds of excellence.

**Kapaṇe tārāye mittam, dubbhikkhe dhaññaṃ dhāraye,
sabhāyaṃ dhāraye sippam, saṅgahāni mahītale.**

Upon earth (these) maintain support: in poverty one should
help a friend, in famine one should preserve grain, in an
assembly one should uphold his skill.

In poverty, one's duty is to help a friend because mutual aid is the first line of defense against destitution. In famine, the imperative is to preserve grain and make careful stewardship of food reserves which ensures collective survival. In an assembly, one must uphold his skill, demonstrating one's competence secures reputation and livelihood. These are not mere suggestions but foundational strategies: protect social bonds in hardship, manage vital resources in scarcity and assert your value in society.

**Dubbhikkhe annadātāraṃ, subhikkhe ca hiraññadaṃ,
bhaye cābhayadhātāraṃ—sabbesaṃ paramaṃ varaṃ.**

In famine be a giver of food, in plenty a giver of gold, in
danger a giver of freedom from fear—for all this is the
supreme blessing.

In famine, the supreme gift is to be a giver of food which addresses the most acute physical need. In times of plenty, the supreme gift is to be a giver of gold for generosity with wealth can help others build security and prosper. In times of danger, the supreme gift is to be a giver of freedom from fear through offering protection, courage and safety. The verse concludes that this responsive, compassionate generosity which meets the core need of the moment is the supreme blessing for all. It is the pinnacle of virtuous conduct, benefiting both giver and receiver.

**Haṁso majjhe na kākānaṁ, sīho gunnaṁ na sobhate,
gadrabhānaṁ na turaṅgo, bālānañ-ca na paṇḍito.**

A goose is not found in the midst of crows, a lion does not shine amongst cows, a horse is not found amongst donkeys, a wise one is not found amongst fools.

A goose, which is a symbol of purity and grace, is not found amongst crows which are symbols of noise and scavenging. A lion, the king of beasts, does not shine or find its majesty amongst cows. A horse, a symbol of speed and nobility, is not found amongst donkeys. By this logic, a wise person is not found amongst fools. The wise avoid such company or, if forced into it, quickly retreat from it. True excellence requires a compatible environment; it is isolated, obscured or driven away by mediocrity and ignorance.

**Na so rājā yo ajeyyaṃ jināti,⁹⁸
na so sakhā yo sakhāraṃ jināti,
na sā bharīyā yā patino vibheti,
na te puttā ye na bharanti jiṇṇaṃ.**

No one who is king conquers his inviolable (parents), no one who is a friend conquers his friend, she is no wife who is in fear of her husband, they are not children who do not support (parents) when old.

He is no king who uses his power to conquer or subdue those who should be inviolable such as his parents. He is no friend who competes with or tries to defeat his friend; true friendship is cooperative, not combative. She is no wife who lives in fear of her husband; a proper marriage is based on mutual respect and affection, not terror. They are no children who fail to support their parents in old age; filial piety is the fundamental duty of offspring. Power, companionship, marriage and lineage are hollow without their corresponding virtues.

⁹⁸ This verse has irregular openings in three of its lines.

**Natthi vijjāsamāṃ mittam, natthi byādhisamo ripu,
natthi attasamāṃ pemaṃ, natthi kammaparam balaṃ.**

There is no friend like knowledge, there is no enemy like
illness, there is no love like self-love, there is no strength
superior to (one's) deeds.

There is no friend like knowledge, for it protects, guides and liberates you in all circumstances, never betraying you. There is no enemy like illness, as it attacks from within, destroys comfort and capability and is an inevitable adversary for all. There is no love like self-love, meaning a wise, caring concern for one's own true welfare, which motivates one to avoid evil and pursue good. There is no strength superior to one's deeds, for the power of intentional action shapes one's destiny more surely than any physical might or external aid.

**Itthimisse kuto sīlaṃ? Maṃsabhakkhe kuto dayā?
Surāpāne kuto saccaṃ? Mahākodhe kuto tapo?**

How is there virtue in a womaniser? How is there compassion
in a meat-eater? How is there truth in a drunkard? How is
there austerity in one of great anger?

How can there be virtue in a womaniser? His life of sensual indulgence is fundamentally at odds with sexual restraint, a pillar of virtue. How can there be compassion in a meat-eater? The act of consuming flesh conflicts with the principle of non-harming. How can there be truth in a drunkard? Intoxication clouds the mind, leading to heedless, exaggerated or false speech. How can there be austerity in one of great anger? Anger is a fiery, consuming passion, the opposite of the cool, disciplined self-restraint that defines ascetic practice.

**Ko 'tibhāro samatthānaṃ? Kiṃ dūraṃ byavahāriṇaṃ?
Ko videso savijjānaṃ? Ko paro piyavādiṇaṃ?**

What is excessive weight for the capable? What is distance to a
businessman? What is foreign to those with knowledge? What
is a stranger to a sweet-talker?

What is excessive weight for the capable? For a truly strong person, no
burden is too heavy. What is distance to a businessman? For a trader,
far-off lands are opportunities, not barriers. What is foreign to those
with knowledge? For the learned, no subject or place is truly alien.
What is a stranger to a sweet-talker? For a charming, eloquent speaker,
no one remains a stranger for long. The emphasis is on inner resource:
capability, enterprise, knowledge and social skill transform potential
obstacles into non-issues or even advantages.

**Dubbhikkho kasino natthi, santānaṃ natthi pāpako,
mugassa kalaho natthi, natthi jāgarato hayaṃ.**

There is no famine for a farmer, there is no demerit for the good, there is no (avoidable) dispute for a fool, there is no loss for the vigilant.

There is no famine for a farmer, if he diligently works his land he will have food, the most basic security. There is no demerit for the good because virtuous people, by definition, do not create the bad deeds that lead to future suffering. There is no avoidable dispute for a fool; a fool, due to his lack of wisdom, inevitably gets into quarrels, so conflict is his constant companion, not something absent. There is no loss for the vigilant, the heedful person, by careful attention, avoids the mistakes and pitfalls that cause loss.

**Bālitthīmakkhikātuṇḍaṃ isīnañ-ca kamaṇḍalu
setambu phalaṃ tambūlaṃ nocchiṭṭham-upajāyate.**

One should not ignore⁹⁹ a young woman, a bee's proboscis, the waterjug of a seer, fresh water, fruit and betel-leaf.

A young woman's power, potential, and sensuality demand respect and caution. A bee's proboscis, though small, carries a sting; meaning minor threats can be dangerous. One should not disrespect the water jug of a seer which signifies his holy mission. Fresh water is a vital resource not to be wasted or polluted. Fruit is the product of a tree's labor, not to be taken for granted. Betel-leaf is a simple offering that facilitates social exchange and respect. None of these should be ignored so as to uphold basis caution and safety.

⁹⁹ The basic meaning of the noun *ucchiṭṭha* is rejected, leftover, spat out; here it is animated by the verb.

**Pañcaratyaṁ sugandhabbā, sattaratyaṁ dhanuggahā,
ekamāsā subhariyā, aḍḍhamāsā sissā malā.**

Good musicians (are known)¹⁰⁰ in five nights, archers in seven nights, good wives in a month, impure pupils in half a month.

A musician reveals his skill or lack thereof in five nights of performance. An archer shows his precision and steadiness in seven nights of practice or contest. A good wife reveals her character, virtue and compatibility in one month of shared domestic life. An impure pupil exposes his bad intentions or character in half a month. The timescale varies with the complexity of the role; superficial skills are quickly assessed, but character and deep compatibility require longer observation. This is practical wisdom for testing and trust.

¹⁰⁰ This seems to be the verb that needs to be supplied. Gray has: is ruined, but it is hard to see how a good wife is ruined in a month.

377 [stm.]

**Malitthiyā duccharitaṃ, maccheraṃ dadato malaṃ,
malā ve pāpakā dhammā, asmiṃ loke paramhi ca,
malā malataraṃ tato, avijjā paramaṃ malaṃ.**

Bad conduct is a woman's stain, stinginess is a giver's stain, wicked actions are indeed stains both in this world and in the next, (but) a stain that is worse than that stain, ignorance is the supreme stain.

Bad conduct is a woman's stain because a woman's social standing is heavily tied to her sexual propriety. Stinginess is a giver's stain, for one whose role is generosity, miserliness is a glaring flaw. Wicked actions are stains in this world and the next, they bring bad reputation here and bad rebirth hereafter. But worse than all these stains is ignorance.

Ignorance, particularly ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, is the supreme stain because it is the root cause of all other defilements. It clouds the mind and ensures endless lives of suffering in saṃsāra.

**Sutassa rakkhā sabbadābhiyogo,
kulassa vattaṃ, purisassa vijjā,
rañño 'pamādo, 'pasamo dhanassa—
itthīnan-tu nattheva jātu rakkhā.**

The protection of learning is constant practice, of a family is its behaviour, of a man is knowledge, of a king, vigilance, of wealth is peace—but of women there is certainly no protection.

The protection of learning is constant repetition and application, without which knowledge is forgotten. The protection of a family is its customary good behavior in upholding traditions and ethics which maintains its honour. The protection of a man is knowledge: his wisdom or tradecraft secures his livelihood and decisions. The protection of a king is vigilance for negligence loses the kingdom. The final line reflects a view of women's perceived innate fickleness or the impossibility of guarding their chastity by external means alone.

**Sattānaṃ jaratā hanti, taṇhā hanti sabbasukhaṃ,
sabbabalaṃ cintā hanti, dayā hanti sakaṃ dhanaṃ.**

Decay destroys beings, craving destroys all happiness, worry
destroys all strength, compassion destroys one's wealth.

Decay destroys beings as the inevitable process of aging and impermanence breaks down all living bodies. Craving destroys all happiness when the endless wanting for what one doesn't have prevents contentment with what one does have. Worry destroys all strength because anxiety and obsessive thought drain mental and physical vitality, paralysing action. Generosity and charity, by their nature, disperse one's material possessions to others. However, this can be considered a noble destruction because it leads to spiritual merit.

**Nīce vāso sirim hanti, hanti garuṃ ca yācako,
pasamsā suguṇaṃ hanti, hanti cittam asaṅṅatā.**

Dwelling in a low place destroys prosperity, begging destroys
dignity, praise destroys good qualities, lack of restraint
destroys the mind.

Dwelling in a low place which may mean a bad location, keeping bad company or having a low social position destroys prosperity; it denies opportunities and exposes one to harmful influences. Begging destroys dignity; it erodes self-respect and the respect of others, making one dependent. Praise, when lavished upon someone, destroys good qualities; it can lead to complacency, pride, and the cessation of effort. Finally, lack of restraint destroys the mind; without self-control, the mind becomes chaotic, distracted, and enslaved to passions.

**Asanaṁ bhayaṁ-antānaṁ, majjhānaṁ maraṇaṁ bhayaṁ,
uttamānaṁ-tu sabbesaṁ avamānaṁ paraṁ bhayaṁ.**

**To the lowly feeding is fearful, to the middling death is
fearful, but to those supreme over all disrespect is fearful.**

For the lowly, the primary fear is lack of food; their concern is daily survival. For the middling, the greatest fear is death, as it threatens the loss of their accumulated wealth, family, and status. For the supreme, the paramount fear is disrespect or insult. Their power and honour are their essence; a blow to their reputation is worse than physical death.

Fear is thus relative to what one has to lose, but the fear of losing respect is what guides noble minds.

**Sūriyo tapanam tapo na santi parivāritā,
candaram sītalam jātam tārakā parivāritā,
upamā ettha ñātabbā sūriyacandarājunaṃ.**

The sun has scorching heat and no attendants, the moon is cool and is surrounded by the stars, here you should understand the simile of the sun, the moon and kings.

The sun has scorching heat but has no attendants; its ferocity makes it isolated. The moon is cool and is surrounded by stars. The implied lesson for kings is clear: a ruler who is too harsh, severe and hot like the sun will drive people away and rule alone. A ruler who is calm, gentle and cool like the moon will attract followers and advisors who cluster around him like stars. True leadership comes from benevolence, not from scorching authority.

**Alaso mandabuddhi ca, sukhito rogapīḷito,
niddālu maṁsavaḍḍhano, subhakkho ca viluddhako.**

The lazy one is dull-witted, the one (too) comfortable is
oppressed by disease, the sleepy one is grows fat, the great
feeder is covetous.

The lazy person becomes dull-witted, as inactivity stagnates the mind. The person addicted to comfort becomes oppressed by disease, as soft living weakens the body's resilience. The sleepy person becomes one grown fat, as excessive sleep slows metabolism and promotes weight gain. The glutton becomes covetous, as his insatiable appetite for food extends to an insatiable desire for other possessions. Each vice breeds a specific form of corruption, mental, physical or moral.

**Pamādo jāyate madā, pamādā jāyate khayō,
khayā dosā pavaḍḍhanti, madam̐ kiṃ na jahe budho?**

From intoxication arises heedlessness, from heedlessness arises exhaustion, from exhaustion faults increase, why would the wise one not abandon intoxication?

From intoxication, whether from alcohol, pride or power, arises heedlessness. A heedless mind loses its guard. From heedlessness arises exhaustion and the ruin of health, wealth, or reputation. From exhaustion, faults increase; as one's situation deteriorates, unwholesome qualities like anger, deceit and despair multiply. Given this inevitable sequence, why would the wise one not abandon intoxication? Seeing the clear trajectory from indulgence to catastrophe, wisdom demands total abstinence from the initial cause.

**Yādisaṃ vapate bījaṃ, tādisaṃ phalaṃ sampatto,
kalyāṇakāri kalyāṇaṃ, pāpakārī ca pāpakaṃ.**

Whatever seed one sows, the same kind one will carry off as fruit, the one who does good (experiences)¹⁰¹ good, the one who does wrong (experiences) wrong.

Whatever seed one sows, the same kind one will carry off as fruit. The nature of the action determines the nature of the result. Therefore, the one who does good will see good, and the one who does wrong will see wrong. There is no exception, no external judge, and no randomness.

The harvest is inherent in the seed. This is both a warning and an encouragement: you are the author of your own destiny through every intentional act, sowing your future happiness or suffering in the present moment.

¹⁰¹ The Jātaka comm. provides the needed verb, saying: *phalam-anubhoti*, he experiences the fruit.

**Puññāpāpaphalaṃ yo ce na saddahati saccato,
so ve sakānanaṃ khippaṃ ādāsatalam-ānaye.**

If one does not have faith in the truth of the results of merit and demerit, one should quickly bring a mirror to one's own (situation).

If a person does not have faith in the truth of the results of merit and demerit, one should not argue abstractly. Instead, one should quickly bring a mirror to one's own situation. Look at your own life: the circumstances, joys, and sorrows you currently experience. They are the visible, present-moment fruits of past actions. Your own condition is the clearest proof. The mirror reflects the direct evidence; personal experience is the undeniable testimony of cause and effect, making abstract belief unnecessary.

**Samparāyikam-atthaṃ yo na saddahati ce pi so
āvāse saggagāmīnaṃ mokkhabhe¹⁰² kiṃ na passati?**

Even if one does not have faith in the truth of the next life
how can he not recognise the light of freedom in the homes of
those destined for heaven?

Even if someone does not have faith in the truth of the next life, they can look at the present world. How can he not recognise the light of freedom in the homes of those destined for heaven? This refers to the palpable peace, generosity and happiness that radiates from the households of virtuous people who are accruing merit for a heavenly rebirth. Their current serenity and good fortune are the early, visible light of their future bliss. The results of good deeds begin to shine here and now, offering observable evidence of the principle.

¹⁰² Gray says *mokkhabhe* means Halls of Freedom, as though it read *mokkhasabhe*. I am taking it as a scribal error for *mokkhābhe* (*mokkha+ābhe*), which makes perfect sense in the context.

**Saddhā hiri ca ottappaṃ bāhusaccaṃ viriyaṃ sati
paññā ca, sattadhammehi sampanno paṇḍito mato.**

Faith, conscience, concern, great learning, energy,
mindfulness and wisdom, endowed with these seven qualities
one is considered wise.

Faith provides the trust to begin and persist. Conscience and concern are the inner and outer moral guardians, having a conscience at the thought of doing wrong and concern about its consequences. Great learning is the accumulation of knowledge. Energy is the effort to apply it. Mindfulness maintains present-moment awareness. Wisdom is the culminating insight into the true nature of things. Faith and wisdom balance each other, energy and mindfulness support learning and conscience and concern guard the entire process.

**Ravi mūlaṃ, Sasī khandhaṃ, Sorī Aṅgā ca pattikaṃ,
Buddhaṃ pupphaṃ, Garu bījaṃ, Bharagu phalam-eva ca.**

Sunday (harvest) the root, Monday the trunk, Saturday and
Tuesday the leaf, Wednesday the flower, Thursday the seed
and Friday the fruit.

This verse presents a traditional astrological or calendrical association, linking each day of the week to a part of a plant, symbolising stages of growth or aspects of life, which reflects a system where each day's planetary influence affects different endeavors, advising on auspicious times for harvesting medicinal plants based on their associated days. Deviance from these associated days was thought to lead to poor health.

[Colophon]¹⁰³
(25 Verses)

390 [stm.]

**Potthakādīni khettaṃ va, lekhāni yuganaṅgalaṃ,
 akkharāni bijaṃ katvā, caranto paṇḍito bhava.**

Books and so on are the field, writing is the yoke and plough,
 having made letters the seed, through (this) conduct one may
 become a wise person.

The texts and scriptures are the fertile ground where knowledge grows. The physical and mental act of writing is the hard work of tilling and preparing that field. Each individual character inscribed is a seed of potential understanding. By diligently engaging in this process of planting and tending, one cultivates wisdom itself. It frames intellectual and scribal work as a sacred, productive husbandry of the mind, which has an effect on the person engaged in it, as well as on others who may read the work.

¹⁰³ This heading is my own, based on the contents of these final verses. Bechert mentions that the next verse is often considered the beginning of the colophon, but it seems to me that the first three verses of this section are part of a single thought-sequence and belong together.

**Akkharaṃ ekamekañ-ca Buddharūpaṃ samaṃ siyā,
tasmā hi paṇḍito poso likheyya Piṭakattayaṃ.**

Each single letter is like a Buddha image, therefore the wise man should write out the Three Baskets.¹⁰⁴

Each single letter of the Dhamma is the same as a Buddha image. Just as creating an image of the Buddha is an act of reverence that generates great merit, so too is inscribing each character of his teaching. Therefore, the wise person's duty is clear: he should write out the Dhamma teachings. This is not merely preservation but an act of devotion and personal cultivation, making the writer a participant in the perpetuation of the Dhamma.

¹⁰⁴ The way the Three Baskets are mentioned in this colophon it is clear the author took that as meaning, not the Canon, as we now think of it, but any teaching related to the Dhamma, including this work.

**Duggatiṃ nābhijāyeyya Piṭakattayakāraḥ,
bahukkhattum Cakkavattirājā catudīpādhipo,
padesarajjāṃ vipulaṃ, gaṇanāto asaṅkhyeyo,
chakāmāvacaro Devarājā hoti bahukkhattum.**

The writer of the Three Baskets cannot be born in a bad destination, many times he will be a Wheel-Turning Monarch, lord of the four continents, he will have extensive sovereignty over the regions, uncountable in number, he will many times be the Lord of the Devas in the six Sensual Realms.

Such a person cannot be born in a bad destination, his negative deeds are utterly blocked, and he will reap supreme worldly and celestial fruits: he will be reborn many times as a Wheel-Turning Monarch, the universal earthly ruler. He will wield extensive sovereignty over regions, uncountable in number. Furthermore, he will many times be Sakka, the Lord of the Devas, in the sensual heavens. The merit is so vast it guarantees repeated attainment of the highest possible positions of power and pleasure, framing this act as the ultimate meritorious deed.

**Dānādīni ca puññāni karonto Bodhi-aṅkuro,
bhavā sabbaṅgasampanno, Tilokapūjito bhаве.**

The Bodhi-sapling, through making merit with giving and so forth, has become endowed with all factors, and will be worshipped in the Three Worlds.

The one who makes merit through practices like giving will not just gain good rebirths, he will become endowed with all the necessary factors and perfections and will be worshipped in the Three Worlds.

The act of preserving the Dhamma is directly linked to joining the lineage of the Buddhas themselves. The scribe's work plants the seed of his own future Awakening, and ensures others can learn the teaching leading to their own Awakening. Passing on the Dhamma is the work of a true Bodhisatta.

**Iddhe mahaddhane phīte jāyare kulam-uttame,
uttameneva saṁvāso, Piṭakattayavācako.**

May the recitor of the Three Baskets be born in a supreme,
powerful, and rich family, and associate with the supreme.

May such a person be born in a family possessing the highest social, political and material advantages. Moreover, may he associate with the supreme, keeping company with noble beings, wise teachers and virtuous friends. This ensures that his life circumstances are perfectly conducive to continuing his Dhamma practice and sharing his knowledge. The reward is not just internal merit but an ideal external environment for spiritual growth.

**Ekakkharaphalena hi Piṭakattayakāraḱo,
caturāsītisahassaṁ, labhanti pavaraṁ sukhaṁ.**

The writer of the Three Baskets, with the fruit of even one syllable, receives¹⁰⁵ the noblest happiness 84,000 (times).

The one who writes out the Dhamma teachings gains merit from writing even one syllable. The fruit of that single character is that he will 84,000 times receive the noblest happiness. Thus, the merit is exponential and boundless. Each act of writing is an investment yielding an infinite return of sublime bliss, emphasising the profound efficiency and power of this form of meritorious work.

¹⁰⁵ *Labhanti* is plural, which does not agree with the subject (*Piṭakattayakāraḱo*) which is singular. We should read *labhati*.

**Appakenāpi medhāvī pābhatena vicakkhaṇo,
samuṭṭhāpeti attānaṃ, anuṃ aggi va sandhamāṃ.**

Even with little, an intelligent, discerning person, by means of an offering, raises himself up, like a small fire that has been fanned is raised up.

Even with little, an intelligent and skilled person, by means of an offering, can raise himself up. Just as a small fire, when fanned, can be raised into a great blaze, so can a small act of generosity or merit, when done with wisdom and skill, generate disproportionately large results. It combats the excuse of poverty or insignificance, teaching that the quality of intention and the object of the offering matter more than the quantity given.

**Dukkhaṃ pāpassa, puññaṃ sukhaṃ, missassa missakaṃ,
sabbhaṃ sadisakaṃ yāti, nātabbaṃ kammuno phalaṃ.**

Suffering from demerit, happiness from merit, a mixture from
a mixture (of deeds), everything comes from its similarity, (so)
should the fruit of deeds be understood.

This verse serves as a concise summation of the law of deeds and results, the foundational principle underlying the entire Dhamma. Suffering comes from demerit. Happiness comes from merit. A mixed result comes from a mixture of deeds. Everything comes from its similarity because like produces like. This is the immutable law the text has illustrated through countless examples. The fruit of deeds should be understood. All the advice on virtue, learning, friendship and duty is predicated on this.

**Codento catubhāgā ca, kammakārā tibhāgā ca,
sāmīno samabhāgā ca, ekabhāgānumodanā.**

Through instigating there is four shares, the workers get three shares, the master a share equivalent to the wealth (given), those who rejoice (also) get a share.

The instigator, the one who organises and urges others, gets four shares of the merit. The workers, those who physically execute the task, get three shares. The master, the donor who provides the wealth needed for the production, gets a share equivalent to the wealth given. Finally, those who merely rejoice in the good deed also get a single share. This teaches that merit is participatory and scalable; everyone involved, from the leader to the admirer, partakes in the fruit, encouraging collective support for virtuous projects.

**Anattassa vākyāparamaṃ tuṅhi,¹⁰⁶
asantamittā paramaṃ ekaṃ,
surūpadārā vamaṃ andhā,
dūrekalābhā varam-assa sukkhaṃ.**

For the selfless one silence is better than (false) speech,
solitude is better than a bad friend, being blind is better than
(looking on another's) beautiful wife, contentment¹⁰⁷ is better
than gains far away.¹⁰⁸

For the selfless one, silence is better than speech; when words could be false, noble silence is certainly preferable. Solitude is better than a bad friend; the peace of being alone surpasses bad companionship. To avoid the temptation and danger of coveting another's spouse, literal blindness would be a lesser evil. Contentment is better than gains far away; the inner peace of having enough is superior to the stress and risk of pursuing distant profits. Each choice prioritises inner integrity and safety over external but perilous opportunities.

¹⁰⁶ If this has a metre, it is unknown to me. The verse seems to be corrupt in its present form, which is presumably why Bechert and Braun flagged it.

¹⁰⁷ I read this as *sukkhaṃ* < *sukhaṃ*, m.c. giving a meaning: contentment.

¹⁰⁸ We now have a series of verses (400–408) which could have been better placed in some of the other chapters, before resuming the theme of the importance of passing the Dhamma down in verse 409.

409 – [Colophon]

401 [sim., stm.]

**Hīnacajjo pi ce hoti uṭṭhātā dhītimā naro
ācārasīlasampanno nise aggi va bhāsati.**

Even a person of lowly birth, if having initiative, persistence
and endowed with good conduct and virtue shines in an
assembly, like a fire.

Even a person of lowly birth, if he possesses initiative and persistence, and is endowed with good conduct and virtue, will shine in an assembly like a fire. His intrinsic qualities: energy, determination, and morality are greater than his origins. When he enters a gathering, his virtue and capability radiate, commanding respect and giving illumination just as a flame lights up a dark room. True worth is self-made through effort and ethics, not inherited by way of birth.

**Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti Brahmaṇo,
kammunā vasalo hoti, kammunā hoti Brahmaṇo.**

One is not an outcaste by birth, by birth one is not a Brahmin,
by deeds one becomes an outcaste, one becomes a Brahmin by
deeds.

One is not an outcaste by birth, nor is one a Brahmin by birth. These social categories are not determined by lineage. The true determinant is action: by deeds one becomes an outcaste, by deeds one becomes a Brahmin. An outcaste is one who acts cruelly, selfishly and unethically. A Brahmin is one who acts with purity, wisdom and restraint. Moral responsibility and spiritual status are entirely in the hands of the individual. Your deeds define you, not your bloodline.

**Pathavī veḷukapattāṃ, cakkavāḷaṃ sucipphalaṃ,
Sineru vammikaṃ khuddaṃ, samuddo pātikaṃ yathā,
ekeneva ca kappena mātukhīraṃ na sañcayāṃ
tato tu samuddo cāpi, atirekataraṃ bahuṃ.**

Like a bamboo-leaf to the earth, a small fruit to the universe,
an ant-hill to Sineru, a small bowl to the ocean, (so) mother's
milk accumulated during one whole aeon is not equal to an
ocean, but is far more than that.

First there are a series of comparisons: a bamboo leaf is tiny compared to the whole earth, a single small fruit is insignificant against the entire universe, an anthill is minuscule beside Mount Sineru, and a small bowl holds but a drop compared to the ocean. These set the mind for a final, overwhelming comparison. The verse then reveals that the total amount of mother's milk a single being drinks throughout countless lifetimes in one aeon is not merely comparable to the ocean, it actually exceeds the ocean by far. This is a statement about the immense duration of our wandering in saṃsāra, and the suffering it entails.

**Brahmā ti mātāpitaro, pubbācarⁱyā ti vuccare,
āhuneyyā ca puttānaṃ pajānam-anukampakā.**

Mother and father are known as dieties, they are said to be our first teachers, as they are kind to their offspring they are worthy of offerings from their children.

Mother and father are known as deities, they are the visible, human gods who give life and sustenance. They are said to be our first teachers, the ones from whom we learn the fundamentals of life. Because they are kind to their offspring, they are worthy of offerings from their children. This frames filial piety not as mere social duty but as a religious obligation equivalent to honouring divinities and enlightened teachers. The home is the first temple, and parents are the first objects of reverence.

**Tasmā hi ne namasseyya sakkareyya ca paṇḍito
annena atho pānena vatthena sayanena ca.
Ucchādanena nhāpena pādānaṃ dhovanena ca
uṭṭhāya pādacariyā upaṭṭhāpeyya paṇḍito.
Idheva naṃ pasaṃsanti, pecca sagge pamodati.**

Therefore a wise one should honour and respect them¹⁰⁹ with food and drink, clothes and bedding. A wise one, after rising and going on foot, should attend to them by massaging, bathing and washing their feet. They praise him right here, and he rejoices when gone to heaven.

A wise child should honour and respect parents with the basic necessities: food, drink, clothes and bedding. Beyond material support, they should provide physical care: massaging, bathing and washing their feet. This service should be done personally and reverently, after rising and going on foot to them. The rewards are both social and spiritual: he is praised by wise people right here and so he gains a good reputation in this life. And he rejoices when in heaven where enjoys a blissful afterlife. Caring for parents is therefore a direct path to earthly honour and celestial happiness.

¹⁰⁹ This is a continuation of the previous verse, and them (*ne*) here means his parents.

**Ekassekena kappena puggalass’ aṭṭhisañcayo
samaṃ pabbatarāsimhi iti vuttaṃ Mahesinā.**

The Lord of Sages said that the heap of bones of one person during a whole aeon would be equal to a range of mountains.

If the heap of bones from a single person’s body over one whole aeon of repeated births and deaths were collected, it would be equal to a mountain range. This shocking image conveys two truths: the incredible length of our wandering in saṃsāra, and the physical cost of that wandering, a mountain of bones from just one being. It is a powerful antidote to complacency, urging the listener to recognise the wearisome, repetitive nature of uncontrolled rebirth and the urgent need to escape the cycle.

**Sabbadānaṃ Dhammadānaṃ jināti,
sabbarasaṃ¹¹⁰ Dhammaraso jināti,
sabbaratiṃ Dhammarati jināti,
sabbadukkhāṃ taṇhakkhayaṃ jināti.**

The gift of the Dhamma surpasses all gifts, the taste of the Dhamma surpasses all tastes, the love of the Dhamma surpasses all loves, craving's destruction overcomes all suffering.

The gift of the Dhamma surpasses all gifts because sharing the teaching is the highest form of generosity. The taste of the Dhamma surpasses all tastes, as the joy of understanding is the sweetest experience. The love of the Dhamma surpasses all loves, for devotion to truth is the most fulfilling passion. The destruction of craving overcomes all suffering. The final line reveals the result: it is the means to the end of suffering itself. Nothing in the conditioned world can compete with the unconditioned truth.

¹¹⁰ This is evidently meant to be Dh 354, but we need to read *sabbaṃ rasam* to repair the metre. The last line in Dh reads: *taṇhakkhayaṃ sabbadukkhāṃ jināti*, which again corrects the metre.

**Appamādaratā hotha, sacittam-anurakkhatha,
dukkhā uddharath' attānaṃ pañke sannaṃ va kuñjaro.**

You should delight in heedfulness, you should always protect your mind, you should raise yourself from this suffering like the tusker sunk in the mud.

You should delight in heedfulness and find joy in vigilance, not in carelessness. You should always protect your mind and guard it from unwholesome states as a top priority. You should raise yourself from this morass of suffering, as your liberation is your own responsibility. Do this like a tusker sunk in the mud uses its own mighty strength to pull itself out. No one can save you but you, using the power of your own mindful effort. Heedfulness is the tool, self-reliance is the method and freedom from the mire of saṃsāra is the goal.

**Caja dujjanasaṃsaggam̐, bhaja sādhusamāgamam̐,
kara puññam-ahorattim̐, sara niccam-aniccataṃ.**

Abandon association with bad people, be devoted to
association with the good, do merit day and night, remember
the (seemingly) permanent is impermanent.

Abandon association with bad people by removing negative influences.

Associate with the good by seeking out noble friends and teachers.

Always engage in wholesome deeds of generosity, virtue and
meditation. Remember the permanent is impermanent so you should
cultivate the insight that everything you cling to is transient. This is the
complete path: ethical purification through good company, active
accumulation of good deeds and the development of liberating wisdom.

418 – [Colophon]

412 [stm.]

**Aniccā vata saṅkhārā, uppādavayadhammino,
uppajjitvā nirujjhanti, tesaṃ vūpasamo sukho.**

Conditions are impermanent, their nature is arising and decay,
after arising they cease, the stilling of them is happiness.

All conditions and compounded things are impermanent, they are processes, not stable entities, and therefore their existence is fleeting. Therefore the stilling of them is happiness. True happiness, Nibbāna, is not found in any arising thing, but in the cessation of the entire conditioned process: the stilling of all conditions and conditioned things. It points directly to the peace that is the end of all arising and passing away.

**Na hi dhammo adhammo ca ubho samavipākino,
adhammo nirayaṃ neti, dhammo pāpeti saggatiṃ.**

**Both the good and the bad do not have the same result, the bad
leads to purgatory, the good brings one to heaven.**

The good and the bad do not have the same result. They lead to diametrically opposed destinations. The bad leads to purgatory, states of intense, even if temporary, suffering. The good brings one to heaven, the states of bliss. There is no moral equivalence, no neutral outcome. Every intentional action propels you inexorably towards one of these ends. Choose your deeds wisely, for they determine your future abiding in suffering or happiness.

**Samasāsaṃ samapādaṃ, antarañ-ca samaṃ samaṃ,
idaṃ manasi nidhāya likheyya Piṭakattayan-ti.**

One should write the Three Baskets keeping this in mind: it should have¹¹¹ uniform margins at top and bottom and uniform spacing in between (the lines).

One should write the Dhamma down carefully. This underscores the theme of reverence for the Dhamma expressed through meticulous, beautiful craftsmanship. This closes the circle, transforming the reader who has received the teaching into a potential writer who will preserve and transmit it, ensuring the Dhammanīti itself continues to guide others with the same attention to detail it advocates for in life.

¹¹¹ Understanding an unwritten *bhāveyya*.