Letters of Gold[1]: Reflections on the Imagery in The Dhammapada

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In Buddhist canonical literature we most readily think of imagery in connection with the great Mahayāna suutras such as the Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa and the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, or the Lotus Sūtra with its wonderful parable of the raincloud and the pivotal symbol of the stupa of Abundant Treasures. Metaphors in the form of symbols proliferate in Vajrayāna Buddhism, predominantly in the ornate and colourful forms of the Samboghakāya Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In the case of the greater dialogues and discourses of the Pali Canon, such as the Dīgha Nikāya and the Majjhima Nikāya, imagery, though by no means absent, is not so much in evidence. The method of the Buddha in these discourses is more direct and Socratic; he engages in dialogue with his interlocutors, leading them step by step, often via a series of questions, to the truth, and from time to time illustrates the point he is making with a story. While this approach also figures in the earlier scriptures collected in the Kuddhaka Nikāya of the Sutta Piṭaka, they are also much richer in imagery, and their language generally more poetic. This is sometimes adduced as evidence of the antiquity of these texts, proof that they are closer to the actual words of the Buddha. The figurative language that the Buddha used quite spontaneously in his original discourses tended to be weeded out as the oral tradition developed over hundreds of years, giving way to the gradual introduction of formulaic repetitions which became indispensable aids to the vital process of memorizing the Buddhavācana. The Dhammapada, belonging as it does to the Kuddhaka Nikāya, predates this development.

The collection of 423 verse aphorisms which comprise the Pali recension of the Dhammapada is what is commonly known as an anthology. The choosing of pieces for an anthology – literally ‘a gathering of flowers’ – is not, as the Dhammapada itself points out, simply a matter of plucking the nearest bloom that comes to hand until one has a big enough bunch. Like flower arrangement in Japan, the gathering of flowers in India was, and still is, itself an art. Verse 45 tells us that the discerning disciple makes out ‘the well-taught Verses of Truth as an expert picks flowers’.[2] We do not know, of course, in the case of the Dhammapada, who the garland maker was; we cannot even be sure that its golden words can be attributed to the Buddha himself.[3] As is the case with any book of sayings of a spiritual master, one can take a single verse at random and use it as a focus of reflection, without having to rely on anything which has gone before. Apart from the division of the verses into chapters, there is no overt sequence of thought or unifying theme. Nevertheless, themes do emerge quite strongly and a full reading yields a pleasing sense of unity.

In his commentary on the text, Bhikkhu Bodhi suggests an interesting schematization of the teachings of the Dhammapada by way of three primary spiritual needs of the aspirant – in terms of this life, future lives, and ultimate liberation from birth and death altogether.[4] The dominant theme is the urgent need to take control of one's life, and by consciously directing the constant flow of mental states, particularly in the sense of willed actions and their fruits, become at last the master of one's spiritual destiny.

One is one's own protector; what other protector should there be? Therefore control this self of yours as a trader (manages) a noble steed. [5]

The whole of the Buddhist path, from the earliest development of ethical sensibility right up to the attainment of Enlightenment, hinges upon this training of the mind.

In the unfolding of this message throughout the text, not sequentially, but more like the echoing of themes in a piece of music, the imagery plays a vital part. It is often the allure of the imagery – the simple beauty of its metaphors and similes – that open the heart and linger in the mind. This poetic force acts as a sort of aesthetic counter-pull to the austere quality of the Buddha's exhortations, as he draws our attention again and again to the urgency of our spiritual plight. The original Pali also no doubt makes considerable use of other poetic devices, such as rhythm,[6] assonance, wordplay, and so on. A fair proportion of these are unfortunately, and inevitably, lost in translation, but the imagery survives – more or less intact – the difficult transition from one language to another.

The main theme is sounded in the first two verses of the first chapter, with the declaration that behind all the experiences of the life of the individual, mind is king. A pair of similes illustrate how states of mind influence behaviour. Suffering follows acting with an impure mind 'just as the cartwheel follows the hoof of the ox', while happiness follows acting with a pure mind 'like a shadow that never departs'.[7] The simplicity of the image underlines the naturalness of inevitable consequences. The Dhammapada's characteristic blend of simplicity with depth is there from the start.

Elaborating on this, the next line is a volley of complaints, which is repeated in the following verse. This is not an image in the usual sense; it does not work by direct or indirect comparison, as in the case of similes and metaphors, but it does present, by way of speech, a vivid sense of someone in a particular kind of predicament. The Dhammapada uses this device to good effect in several places.

In this case the utterance in question is the typical moan of self-righteous outrage of someone who's been badly treated:

He abused me, he beat me, he conquered me, he robbed me.[8]

This mode of expression really bites; it is easy to identify the voice with one's own lapses, for one recognizes how common it is to stoke the fires of resentment with this kind of wailing monologue, inner or outer. The Buddha goes on to point out that those who entertain such thoughts will not still their hatred. The word 'entertain' here in Sangharakshita's translation is apposite in that it is itself charged with metaphor. Whether the original Pali 'upanayhanti', the third person plural form of a word literally meaning 'to bear ill will', is charged to the same degree, my minimal knowledge of Pali forbids me to say. Other translators have rendered it variously as 'those who harbour', 'those who dwell on', even 'those who wrap themselves in'. The appeal of 'entertain' is that it suggests not just inadvertently letting in such destructive thoughts, but actually inviting them in, and having invited them, giving them a really good time. The metaphorical import of 'entertain' thus conveys that initial sense of perverted pleasure derived from indulgence in resentment before it really begins to burn.

The Buddha drives home his point with a delivery of the fundamental principle:

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; they cease only through love. This is the eternal law.[9]

This alternating of imagery with straight, literally-worded declarations, each having the effect of throwing the other into bold relief, is another typical feature of the Dhammapada.

Mind continues as the dominant theme in several more verses of the opening vagga or chapter, as well as in the next two chapters. The title of Chapter 2 is Appamāda Vagga, the section on mindfulness, mindfulness here in the sense of heedfulness or vigilance. Chapter 3 is Citta Vagga, the section on Mind. Mind here comes across not so much as a repository of consciousness out of which our thoughts magically appear, but as a very powerful stream of energy which has to be controlled. It can be a wonderful power for the good, or, wrongly directed, a very destructive force. Hence the Buddha's tone of urgency in exhorting us to control it, a task requiring considerable skill in view of the mind's tendency to be 'fickle and difficult to control, alighting wherever it pleases'. [10]

The art of controlling the wayward mind is sometimes compared to the taming of a wild horse, or to

various skills widely practised in India at the time of the Buddha. The disciple should direct his mind as a fletcher straightens his arrow, or as a carpenter shapes wood. These are not so much images as usually understood in the context of literary criticism so much as analogues aligning the problem of mind control with the skill developed by various trades and occupations, simple comparisons which came naturally to mind as the Buddha delivered his discourses. The most telling of these analogues is the reference to the vital business of irrigation. In the world of the early Sangha, the way the scarce supply of water was channelled could make the difference between life and death. Just as vital as the farmer's skill in channelling the waters onto his crops in the day-to-day world, is the man of understanding's skill in directing his wayward mind, for

Whatever foe may do to foe, or hater to hater, greater is the harm done (to oneself) by a wrongly directed mind.[11]

While on the surface the irrigator analogue is no more than an obvious reference, a simple allusion to a common occupation, it is the accumulation of such topical touches that progressively evoke the world in which the teaching was given, helping us see it, hear it, feel it. Occasionally, too, they somehow manage, in their wider context, to transcend their own topicality, and take on a greater significance, again rather as a snatch of melody – it might only be a matter of a few notes – makes itself felt in the context of the whole movement. The irrigator image also yields the association of the water of life surging and flowing unceasingly between birth and death, and no doubt beyond those arbitrary confines. Life flows within us, indeed we are the flow – this is one of the Dhammapada's recurrent melodies – and if we do not choose to channel it, it will follow the path of least resistance, which it is the nature of water to do, finding its way through any chink or crevice in our spiritual defences, and do serious damage. Thus water is not always a beneficent force. In the form of rain it can be a blessing, or a curse. As the feeder of crops it is welcome; when it seeps into the house, it is not. The Buddha draws on both aspects. In the Section of Pairs, he uses the destructive aspect of rain to communicate the dangers of lust:

As the rain penetrates the badly thatched house, so lust enters the (spiritually) undeveloped mind. [12]

Water as destroyer strikes again when the Buddha is talking about the man so infatuated with worldly preoccupations that he completely forgets the ever present threat of death, which may suddenly carry him off 'as a great flood carries away a sleeping village'.[13] By contrast, the man who lives with energy, mindfulness and self-restraint makes '(for himself) and island that no flood

can overwhelm',[14] while the passionately lustful man falls back into the torrent (of repeated existence).[15]

Another kind of water image is duplicated in a pair of verses in Pāpa Vagga, the Section on Evil. Here the Buddha is concerned that we do not underestimate the importance of single – and what we can therefore so easily think of as insignificant – skilful or unskillful acts, for, he remind us:

A water- pot becomes full by the constant falling of drops of water.[16]

The appeal of the image is partly visual: the water dripping from the jutting stone lip of a spring into a large brass water pot, and partly auditory: one hears the resounding ping of those single drops of water. We pick up a faint echo of this in a much later verse in which the true Brāhma.na, not clinging to sensuous pleasures, is 'like a drop of water on a lotus leaf', sliding off, and plopping back into the pool of perfect contentment. Reflecting on the positive version of this image of the water-pot filling drop by drop, one is soothed and reassured by its implications. There is only the present moment, this single drop of time in which we live. All we have to do is act skillfully now, channel our energies now, be mindful this instant, or, to suggest a variation of the famous proverb: look after the moments, and the years will look after themselves.

Another memorable word of comfort is given in the Loka Vagga, where the transition from heedlessness to heedfulness is made with a lovely image of the moon. It is a reminder of the ever-present possibility of turning about from skilful to unskillful, which is so often related to mindfulness, its almost magical ability to transport us, swiftly and suddenly, out of the dark and back into the light.

Whoever was heedless before and afterwards is not; such a one illumines this world like the moon freed from the clouds.[17]

Later the Buddha advises his monks to take those who have entered the transcendental path as our exemplars, 'as the moon follows the path of the stars'.[18] Such comparisons call to mind the outdoor life of those early disciples, opening their eyes to the beauty of the night at the end of a session of meditation: the bright moon drifting out from behind a dark cloud mass, or a clear midnight sky sprinkled with stars.

The brighter more encouraging aspect of the spiritual quest is certainly given its due in the sections on 'the Arhant', 'the Enlightened One', and 'the Brāhma.na', while other verses dwell on the heroic

aspect of the Ideal, all of which we will be exploring below. Nor can one forget the beautiful section on Happiness where the verses build to a litany of appreciation in honour of the true Dharma-farer who, having tasted the sweetness of solitude, enjoys 'the sweetness of the bliss of the Dhamma'.[19] In other stretches of text, the notes of encouragement come almost as light relief periodically breaking into what can sometimes seem like the relentlessly earnest tone of the Dhammapada. We have to remember, after all, that the teaching is addressed primarily to those who are technically 'worldlings', aspirants who have not yet entered on the transcendental path. As worldlings, with such deeply ingrained samsaric proclivities, our predicament is dire; we cannot see, to borrow a metaphor from another source, that our turbans are on fire; the Buddha in the Dhammapada wants us to see that until we have attained the point of irreversibility on the path, we are in constant danger, hence his reference to sovereignty in connection with the Fruit of Stream Entry:

The Fruit of Stream Entry is better than sole sovereignty over the earth, (better) than going to heaven, (better) than lordship over all the worlds. [20]

The danger of flopping back, this side of Stream Entry, into the more familiar waters of Samsara is brought into very sharp focus in the second verse of the Citta Vagga with the image of a fish caught in a net, threshing about in agony as it is hauled out of the water, its natural habitat.

As a fish threshes from side to side when taken from one abode to another and cast on dry land, so the mind throbs and vibrates (with the strain) as it abandons the domain of Māra.[21]

This captures that very strong sense of finding oneself, at a certain stage of spiritual development, out of one's element, as if unable to breathe the air in the domain of the spiritual and consequently yearning to flop back into the relative ease of worldly comfort. It is that painful, and, unfortunately, in many cases, enduring, stage in which one is strongly drawn to the transcendental but at the same time feels the powerful pull of the mundane. The spiritual element. seems for a long time strangely alien, not our natural abode, and the air, as we approach the new domain, is hard to breathe. There are also overtones of the evolutionary struggle, of the first amphibians, struggling to accommodate to the air after being confined for aeons to the waters of the deep. We are the spiritual amphibians, swimming, and feeling more at home in the waters of sa.msāra, yet coming out for longer periods, like frogs, sniffing at the sweet airs of our distant freedom. The conflict at this crucial stage of evolution, the cross-over between the two modes, from the samsaric to the nirvanic, is the battle of the spiritual life, in which the wise, 'having conquered Māra and his army, are led (away) from the world'. What we are up against is ourselves; we are our own worst enemy, as one of the most famous verses of all makes clear:

Though one should conquer in battle thousands upon thousands of men, yet he who conquers himself is (truly) the greatest in battle. [22]

We are urged to fortify the mind ‘as though it were a city’, a city perhaps under siege, or, as a later verse puts it, ‘Like a frontier city well-guarded within and without’.

Images of taming and curbing, restraining this wild beast of our lower self, proliferate; there is a marked sense of turmoil, of the turbulent movement of struggle, of striving to hold in check what is slipping out of control. The Master’s insistent advice is to tame the mind: ‘a tamed mind brings happiness’.[23] In a chapter entitled Elephant, the voice suddenly becomes first person; the speaker, noting that the mind roams about all over the place, as it tends to, resolves that henceforth he will control it ‘as the wielder of the (elephant driver’s) hook controls the rutting elephant.[24] Desperate measures! If we guard the gates of the senses, they become pacified ‘like horses well controlled by the charioteer’.[25] That man is a charioteer, the Buddha says, ‘who holds back the arisen anger as though holding back a swerving chariot’. Others, he adds, rather dryly, ‘are only holders of reins’. [26] Narada Thera tells the story of a tree sprite who was so infuriated by a monk who cuts down a tree to make a hut for himself that she wanted to kill him, but just managed to hold herself back. When she tells the Buddha the story, he utters this same verse.[27]

Yet all this struggle and strife that the many images of vigorous restraint suggest, is, it seems, only one aspect of the enterprise to direct our spiritual life onto the right lines. The chief battle strategy the Buddha recommends is, ironically (after all those figures of conflict and conquest), the non-violent response. He has mentioned it before in the first section where he says that hatred does not cease with hatred, but only with love. Again, in the section on Anger, he points to opposites as the most effective weapons for the overcoming a particular vice. Thus we are to ‘conquer’ anger by non-anger, overcome the wicked with good, the miserly by giving, the telling of lies with truth. We think, rather desperately sometimes: ‘how, just how, am I to get the better of this overpowering destructive emotion?’ And naively reach out for the heaviest artillery, the psychic equivalent of a huge club spiked with nails. But no, the most effective antidote is gentle, peaceful, beneficent. The peaceful, in the end, prove stronger than the warlike. This strategy of availing oneself of the opposite is that of the spiritual hero in the Appamāda Vagga, who drives out unmindfulness by means of mindfulness. It is worth quoting the verse in full to get a feel for the rhythm of his climb to the Summit of Wisdom:

As a dweller in the mountains looks down on those who live in the valley, so the spiritually mature

person, the hero free from sorrow, having driven out unmindfulness by means of mindfulness, ascends to the Palace of Wisdom and looks down at the sorrowful, spiritually immature multitude (below).[28]

This has a smoother, more graceful feel to it than the more tortuous spiritual ascent described by the English poet, John Donne:

On a huge hill,

Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and he that will

Reach her, about must, and about must go.[29]

Once the victory, in the sense of Nirvā.na, has been achieved, it is secure: no one, not even Māra, or Brāhma, the highest of the gods, can take it away. In another sense, of course, we have to give up thinking in such terms, for 'victory begets hatred', and the defeated suffer. 'The tranquil one experiences happiness, giving up (both) victory and defeat.' [30] The verse which follows this reverts to the elements, with the declaration: 'There is no fire like lust.'

As is the case with water, there is an ambivalence with respect to the images of fire. On the one hand, 'there is no fire like lust', everything is 'blazing with the threefold fire of suffering', the evil-doer 'burns with remorse in both worlds' and is burned by his evil deeds 'as though consumed by fire'. Twice the Buddha resorts to a graphic and more drastic image to draw attention to the dangers of unmindfulness:

Don't through heedlessness swallow a red hot iron ball, and when it scorches you cry out 'What torment'. [31]

On the other hand, the mindful person, constantly vigilant of his spiritual state, 'advances like fire, burning up fetters gross and subtle' and unwavering mindfulness gobbles up our deficiencies like a consuming fire.

The element air features less than either water or fire, but it is the first to make its appearance. In the Yamaka Vagga, we are warned that as the wind blows down a weak tree, so Māra overthrows one who lives seeing the unlovely as lovely, but if we see the unlovely as unlovely, and the lovely as the lovely, Māra will not overthrow us 'as the wind does not blow down the rocky mountain peak'.[32]

The power of the good is so strong that, unlike the fragrance of flowers .. and aromatic resin, it actually goes against the wind. Not only that, but it is the fragrance of virtue that blows amongst the highest of the gods.[33] Thus we have the association, in terms of scents on the wind, of the good with the beautiful. On the darker side, all our evil will eventually return to us, 'like fine dust thrown against the wind'.[34]

The earth element is also pervasive, mainly in the form of what we might term nature images. We have already had the weak tree and the rocky mountain peak. The fourth chapter is all about flowers. A disciple in training studies the Dharma in the same spirit as an expert garland-maker picks flowers. But the image is given a negative slant later where those under the sway of craving pluck only the flowers of existence.[35] Nirvāna itself flourishes in the midst of the detritus of Sa.msāra just as

…pink lotuses, sweet-scented and lovely, spring from a heap of rubbish thrown in the highway.[36]

We are to get rid of our sticky affection in one swift move, 'as one plucks with one's hand the white autumnal lotus.' [37] Earlier the Buddha exhorts us to cut down not just one tree but the whole forest. He is speaking specifically of the entanglements of sexual craving and goes on to say, in his gentle but uncompromising way, that to the extent that the disciple still yields to sexual desire, to that extent his mind will be fettered, 'as the sucking calf to its mother'.[38] Images of luxuriating growth and deep roots lend themselves quite naturally to the subject of craving, which increases, if we are not careful 'like the māluvā creeper'. The same simile is used more graphically to describe the behaviour of the corrupt man: the damage he does to himself is 'like a Māluvā creeper overspreading a Sal tree'.[39] Again, harping on the creeper-like properties of tanhā, the Enlightened One is blessedly free 'of that ensnaring entangling craving'. If we allow ourselves to be overcome by it, our sorrows will grow 'like the biiira.na grass that is rained upon'. Therefore, the Buddha warns us yet again, the only really effective way of dealing with it is not by just cutting it down, but by uprooting it. So we have to 'dig out the root of craving, as the seeker of the usiira digs out the biira.na grass'.[40] By contrast, the man who is addicted to intoxicating substances is said to dig up his own roots of merit. So again, the image is used to work both ways.

Since the goal of the path is to transcend birth and death altogether, the body, being an essential component of the psychophysical organism, is not looked kindly upon in the text, and strong medicine is prescribed for the overcoming of our attachment to it. The section 'Old Age', or

‘Decay’ focuses on this with rapid bursts of disgust. The body is fragile, ‘like a clay pot’ and is in turns likened to froth, to a useless log lying on the ground, to a painted doll, a pretentious mass of sores, a nest of diseases. Its dove-grey bones will eventually lie scattered about discarded, ‘like gourds in autumn’. The monks might well have used such passages as a basis of reflection on impermanence.

The body is also seen as the place ‘we’ inhabit, ‘a city built of bones and plastered with flesh and blood’.[41] The section on ‘The Mind’ goes on to describe the psychophysical organisms constructed through life after life as a series of dwellings built by ego. The house-building is at last seen through, recognized as the cause of all suffering, and the attainment of Enlightenment is expressed in terms of de-constructing, of dismantling; all buildings, once and for all, are to be pulled down, or left in ruins. In two much-quoted verses, the tone shifts from the alternating modalities of urgent exhortation or reflection to a trumpet note of triumph. In The Light of Asia, Sir Edwin Arnold attributes these verses to the future Buddha at the point of his Enlightenment. He quotes them at the climax of the poem, the moment when Siddhārtha finally breaks through to Awakening. The second of the two verses deconstructs some of the stages – walls and roof – by which our prison comes to be built: delusion constructs, Enlightenment deconstructs!

Many a house of life

Hath held me – seeking ever him who wrought

These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;

Sore was my ceaseless strife!

But now,

Thou builder of this tabernacle – thou!

I know thee! Never shalt thou build again

These walls of pain,

Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay

Fresh rafters on the clay;

Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!

Delusion fashioned it! [42]

When the text switches from the lower slopes of the spiritual climb to the higher, from the worldling to the Enlightened ones, it modulates to beautiful images of birds in flight; images of air, of light, and of space, and the heavenly bodies moving through space, tend to predominate. Arahants, free from all fetters gross and subtle, 'abandon whatever security they have, like wild geese quitting a lake'. The sound of the image in the original Pali: 'haṁsā va pallalaṁ hitvā'[43] suggests the cry of the departing birds. This motif is repeated later with reference to Arahants who have attained psychic powers: they go through the air as swans follow 'the path of the sun'. In the succeeding verse, the path of the Arhant is likened, more generally, to that of birds in the sky. The trackless path of birds in flight is a recurring image in The Dhammapada, especially in connection with the Buddha himself. In the opening verses of Section Fourteen, 'The Enlightened One', the Buddha is the Trackless One: like birds flying across the sky, he leaves no trace. Earlier we are reminded that few attain to the state of Arahantship, just as few birds escape who are caught in the trapper's net. Only one other kind of bird appears, apart from geese and a single 'impudent crow' (the arrogant one, who is disparaging of others' merits), and that is the heron. Those who have neglected their spiritual development are likened to 'aged herons in a pond without fish'.[44] How sad, the condition of those who have not made use of their spiritual opportunities while young and strong. This variation on the theme of impermanence is sounded again, almost like a taunt, modulating from heron to leaf: You are now like a withered leaf …You stand at the door of departure, and you do not even have provisions for the road.' [45] This is echoed in The Man of Principle, where it is made clear that one is not a true elder among monks just by virtue of being white-haired; such, says the Buddha, are called 'grown old in vain'.

Since the Enlightened one no longer indulges in any egoistic house-building, his energies are free to expand without obstacle; there are no longer any walls or roof, no boundaries holding him in, or back. His sphere, therefore, is endless; for this reason also, as we have seen, he leaves no traces, like the flight of birds across the sky. Because the Buddha has developed perfect equanimity with respect to beings, 'there exist no bonds'. Therefore no bounds. The spiritually mature person delights 'in the sphere of the Noble Ones', that is, the Arahants, who have broken all fetters gross and subtle. Conversely, those who take the inessential as essential, and vice versa, are said to wander in the cramped sphere of false views. The Buddha's sphere being as infinite as space, he shines like the stars in the firmament. In the final section, The Brāhma.na, the armed warrior shines bright, and the brāhma.na absorbed in meditation shines bright, but the Buddha himself, brighter than either, 'shines bright by day and by night, (shining) with splendour'. [46]

Many of the sayings in this precious anthology deliver their truths literally, with a pithy directness and simple antithesis typical of the aphorism.

Better than a hundred years lived in idleness and in weakness is a single day ... lived with courage and powerful striving. [47]

Language could hardly be more literal than that. It is good, sometimes, to receive one's precepts unadorned, to be told straight, for instance, that hatred does not cease with hatred, but only with love. Such directness is one of the Dhammapada's engaging qualities. But scattered so liberally throughout the text – at a rough count over 140 in the total 423 verses – are the images we have been exploring. Some of these, like the analogies with trades and occupations, are simple adornments of the direct truths. In the case of others, such as that of the fish threshing from side to side, the truth cannot so easily be separated from the way in which it is delivered: the medium is the message. The imagery accumulates as we read, conjuring up a world, mainly that of ancient India, with its farmers irrigating fields, its elephants in rut, and the brahmins tending the Vedic fire, but also our contemporary world, where the moon still sails free of the clouds, and where it is still (just about!) possible to see and hear wild geese quitting a lake. When one puts the book away again, to reflect and assimilate its impact, one is left feeling not only blessed by the Dharma delivered so straight that there is no possibility of misunderstanding, but also deeply touched by the poetic evocation of a sublime spiritual ideal.

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[1]. 'The teachings contained in the Dhammapada are literal truth, and deserve to be engraved on our hearts in letters of gold – or fire'. Sangharakshita, Peace is a Fire, Windhorse Publications, 1995.

[2]. Dhammapada, The Way of Truth, translated by Sangharakshita, Windhorse Publications, 2001.

[3]. In the introduction to his own translation, K.R.Norman draws attention to Winternitz's observation that the collection came to include some sayings which were originally not Buddhist at all. SeeThe Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada), Pali Text Society, Oxford, 1997.

[4]. The Living Message of the Dhammapada, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Bodhi Leaves, no 129, Buddhist Publication

Society, Sri Lanka, 1993.

[5]. Dhammapada, op.cit v 380.

[6]. See Norman, op.cit, on Metres of Dhammapada pp.xxv ff.

[7]. Dhammapada, The Way of Truth, op.cit. vv 1 & 2.

[8]. Ibid., vv. 3 & 4.

[9]. Ibid., v. 5.

[10]. Ibid., v. 35.

[11]. Ibid., v. 42.

[12]. Ibid., v.v 13 & 14.

[13]. Ibid., v. 47.

[14]. Ibid., v.25.

[15]. Ibid., v.347.

[16]. Ibid., v.v121 & 122 .

[17]. Ibid., v.172.

[18]. Ibid., v.208.

[19]. Dhammapada, Wisdom of the Buddha, translated by Harischandra Kaviratna, Theosophical University Press, 1989, v205.

[20]. Dhammapada, The Way of Truth, v.178.

[21]. Ibid., v.34.

[22]. Ibid., v.103.

[23]. Ibid., v.35.

[24]. Ibid., v. 326.

[25]. Ibid., v.94.

[26]. Ibid., v.222.

[27]. op.cit.

[28]. Ibid., v.28.

[29]. The Poems of John Donne ed Sir Hubert Grierson, OUP 1951 Satyre III, ll.79-81.

[30]. Dhammapada, the Way of Truth, v.201.

[31]. Ibid., v.371.

[32]. Ibid., v.v 7 & 8.

[33]. Ibid., Section of Flowers passim.

[34]. Ibid., v.125.

[35]. Ibid., v.47.

[36]. Ibid., v.58.

[37]. Ibid., v.285.

[38]. Ibid., v.284.

[39]. The Dhammapada, Pali text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes by Narada Thera, reprinted by The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1999, v.162 p147.

[40]. The Dhammapada, The Way of Truth by Sangharakshita, op.cit., v. 337 p.113.

[41]. Ibid., v.150.

[42]. The Light of Asia by Sir Edwin Arnold Windhorse Publications 2000 pp. 131-2.

[43]. The Dhammapada, The Way of Truth, v.91.

[44]. Ibid., v.155.

[45]. Ibid., v.235.

[46]. Ibid., v.387.

[47]. The Dhammapada, The Path of Perfection, translated by Juan Mascaro, Penguin Books, 1973 v. 112.