

THE TREE OF
WISDOM
BY
NARGARJUNA
EDITED AND
TRANSLATED BY
W. L. CAMPBELL

PUBLISHED IN CALCUTTA, 1919

Tree Of Wisdom By Nargarjuna . This web edition published by Global Grey 2012.

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GLOBAL GREY

NOTHING BUT E-BOOKS

The She-rab Dong-bu is an ethical treatise written by the illustrious Nargarjuna. Although he is celebrated as one of the most subtle thinkers that Buddhism, and indeed the world, has ever produced, this work is fairly simple and intended for a broad audience. Particularly striking is the nearly rabid misogyny, a feature fully in keeping with the time and place of composition, but one that we might wish not to see in the writing of the grand formulator of the Madhyamika School of philosophy.



PREFACE

The SHE-RAB DONG-BU (Tree of Wisdom) is a metrical translation in Tibetan of a Sanskrit ethical work entitled *Prajña Danda*, written by Nargarjuna who flourished in the fourth century of the Buddhist era (about 100 B.C.E.). The Tibetan version was probably made about the 11th century of our era but the exact date has not been determined. It is included in the Ten-gyur, section, volume, beginning at leaf 165. The Tibetan translator describes it as the second volume but I cannot say whether the remainder of the work has been preserved in Tibetan—the Sanskrit original is apparently lost.

When this work was selected as one of the textbooks for the Higher Proficiency Examination in Tibetan, the Tibetan text was edited by the late Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das and printed in continuous lines as is done in Tibet. This adds to the difficulties of the student as there is nothing to show where one verse ends and the next begins. No English translation was prepared at that time, and the present attempt has been made with the object of assisting future students of Tibetan.

The poem is known by name to the educated classes in Tibet but few laymen appear to have read it and fewer still to understand the many obscure passages. In the course of two years spent in Tibet I sought the assistance of monks and laymen in and around Gyantse but only succeeded in finding one elderly scholar who had read the poem. The Abbot of the Palkor Monastery was good enough to make enquiries at Trashi Lhunpo regarding the possible existence of a commentary on this work, but without success. By the courtesy of the Tibetan Trade Agent at Gyantse, Khenchung Lobzang Chungne Lotsawa, the printed text was compared with the xylograph edition forming part of the Tengyur collection in the Palkor Monastery and a number of errors detected. It must, however, be added that the Palkor text does not appear to be absolutely accurate. All that can be claimed for the present edition is that it is more correct than the earlier printed text.

Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das remarked in his preface that the Sherab Dong-bu was "largely quoted by Tibetan authors" but it is hardly quotation in the ordinary sense of the word. Later writers have borrowed many of the sentiments and sometimes entire lines, inserting them in their own compositions. This is particularly the case in the *Sakya Leg-she* (Sans. *Subhashita Ratna Niti Nama Shastra*), written by the celebrated Kun-gah Gyaltsen in the 13th century of our era, which is said to be a rechauffé of the works of three earlier writers on the same subject. I mention this here as the works of Nargarjuna appear to have been not so much the subject of quotation as the source of extensive literary piracies.

The present translation was made at Gyantse, but the number of passages to which no clear meaning could be assigned by the Tibetans was so great that I was in doubt whether it would be possible to proceed with publication, until I came to Gangtok and obtained the invaluable assistance of Kazi Dawa Samdup, Head Master, Bhutia Boarding School. Kazi Dawa Samdup had the advantage of receiving a scholarly explanation of the first 102 verses from a learned Lama Geshe Kachen Tundrup of Shigatse, who studied the book some years ago and was accordingly able to give the meaning assigned by tradition to some of the passages which appear quite incomprehensible at first sight.

The latter part of the translation was done without this special advantage and some of the more difficult passages remain to be properly explained. The extreme baldness of the translation is intentional.

I take this opportunity of recording my gratitude to the many Tibetan gentlemen who assisted me at the start, and above all to Kazi Dawa Samdup, without whose assistance this translation would never have seen the light. Finally I would acknowledge my obligation to the Hon'ble Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Sind the Calcutta University who have undertaken the printing of the text and translation.

W. L. Campbell



GANGTOK, SIKKIM:

October 1918

In the Tibetan Language the Commentary of Manners is called "The Tree of Wisdom."

I Do Obeisance To The Three Deities

Evil persons should be brought under control. The wise should be revered. Fill your treasury with honest deeds and protect your own countrymen.

As regards your own secrets and those of others, if you guard these as your own dear child he for whom all earthly things are equal will make love for man the principal affection.

If your wife is evil and your friend evil, if the King is evil and your relative's evil, if your neighbor is evil and the country evil, then abandon them for a distant land.

Avoid that friend who is greedy for wealth. Avoid a wife who is fond of fornication. If unskillful in curing and hard to please or respect avoid such a doctor.

Although you know the difference between good and bad deeds you should carry out your work after consultation. Although you may only succeed partially even without succeeding you are to be admired.

The steadfast that speak in few words and politely are very much respected by mankind. As the sun which coming out from the shadow by his rays creates great heat.

As regards these doctrines, though you may suffer yet be not anxious in your mind. When the moon has been eclipsed will it not shine again?

Just as for the garlands on the altars only full-blown flowers are gathered, so a gardener, in the same way, does not uproot the plant.

Rewards and royal favors, the price of prostitution and praise from pupil, the hire of a boat and the rent of a dwelling, these may be asked for at once For these six are not to be had after a long interval.

A magic spell misunderstood is poison. Indifference to illness is poison. An old man keeping company with woman is poison. A poor man's sleep in the daytime is poison.

Worthy men who do not make many promises, but if a promise is made under pressure then it is like a carving on stone. Even should they die it is not altered.

You will come to terms with your enemy on occasion and on occasion you will quarrel with your friends. Having learned to distinguish what should be done and what not, the clever man will always select his opportunity.

If you sin in speech you will be damned. The parrot, the singing bird and the water hen, the silent water-duck which man does not catch--Their entire accomplishment is keeping silence.

If you keep your weapons in order your enemy will be subdued. By wearing poor clothes a woman will be subdued. By treatment illness will be subdued. Ignorance will be subdued overcome by effort.

Keep your resolves to yourself as a secret, like the body, which lies hid in the mud. If it were not that the sprouts attract attention that would find the lotus root?

Although it may become perceptible still a non-existent substance reality will not be mentioned. How could the peacock in the painting eat the jewels?

If anyone plans in his mind to do evil he always uses pleasant words to the other. When the hunter sees the game to be killed he sings a sweet song to please it.

Whatever your thought or opinion may be it should be clearly impressed on all men's minds. They are thus brought under your control, as by the wish-granting gem.

It is easy to live by carrying the loads of others. It is easy to dress in tree-bark in the forest. It is easier for men to die than to spend their days in quarrelling.

The root-principle of mankind is not to quarrel. What would you do with wealth obtained by quarrelling? What would you do with wealth and life obtained by pride and the suppression of good?

He who undertakes work which he cannot carry out, who vies with the multitude and disputes with the powerful, who lets a woman know his thoughts--The four gods of death sit at his door.

Regard not an evil prince. Regard not deceitful relatives. Regard not a lustful woman. Regard not a great sinner.

He who can go anywhere why should he be injured through his attachment to his own native land? The evil man says "it is my own well" and saying thus, drinks the brackish water.

A highly learned man has two forms of felicity. Either he will abandon all earthly interests or else has much, which could be abandoned.

He whose glory has left him and whose efforts have become meaningless, when a holy man becomes impoverished in this way He is unhappy except in a forest.

The career of a holy man is of two kinds. Like a flower waving its head, which is either honored by all in the world or else disappears alone in the forest.

Life, which perishes naturally in a moment, has this as its essence. As your actions and intellect are undeveloped remain modest in society.

An anthill increases by accumulation. Similarly eye-medicine is used up by distribution. The to-be-feared grows less by association. That is the thing to understand.

The anthill and honey, the waxing moon, up to the full, the possessions of kings and beggars increase by gradual accumulation.

Do not be excessively covetous. Great greed entails punishment. If you are stultified by excessive covetousness you are like the fox that was killed by the bow.

He who always pursues the man who can do something for him and pays no heed to the man who has done something is like the wicked man whose ear was filled with curds. Such a one has stolen that which was guarded. O, Karna, evil-minded like curdled milk; you have conquered what you should have protected.

Do not go in search of excessive fame. Judge honestly for yourself. By the fall of the 'bel' fruit into the water See, the forest was deserted.

Do not say things, which hurt the feelings of others. Do not speak in a very injurious way. The good man and the armed enemy become known.

Even if the son of his enemy speaks sweetly the wise man is not indifferent. As a poisonous leaf is extremely potent irresistible it will cause injury at any time.

Whosoever does benefit to his enemy with straightforward intention, by so doing all enemies will arrive at the state of folding their hands in devotion.

In desiring to injure your enemy praise his inherent good qualities. What do evil thoughts of injury do? They injure you and not your enemy.

Be firm with the unruly, not with mildness but with suitable harshness. If the children are not diligent does not the beneficent father threaten punishment?

As long as you watch the 'way,' as long as your steps are steady, as long as your wisdom is unimpaired, so long is there profit for you.

If you are always seeking your own advantage what is the use of remaining among the multitude? There exists no means whatever for making all beings rejoice exceedingly.

To seek from others and yet wish for good food, to spend your life in begging and yet have great pride, to be ignorant of literary works and yet wish to dispute--these three make you ridiculous to others.

The fire, which burned the forest, became the companion of the wind, and that same extinguished the fire. So has the weak man no friends.

Not doing harm to others, not bowing down to low people, not abandoning the path of virtue--these are small points but really very many.

Having no fear of disease, endeavoring to associate with the holy, not using the vulgar language of the mean--A day spent thus is greater than a hundred years.

Whenever the mean find a little wealth they despise everybody and are filled with pride. But the virtuous, although they may attain the possession of wealth, remain bowed like ripe rice.

Low class creatures, should they become possessed of wealth or science, think only of quarrelling with everybody like the fox with the blue skin.

If they become possessed of wealth or learning low people become proud. But even when doubly honored the wise man will become the more humble.

Trade without profit, quarrelling with those who have a following, despising to beg and thus poor, delighting in lust, using rough language to young women--these five are improper conduct in a man.

The peacock, although scorched by heat in summer, would rather hope for rain from the middle of the sky than bend its proud neck to the bad water of the dirty pond.

The ti-ti-ra bird preserves its own life somehow with dewdrops; for it fears to be placed under an obligation by begging and will not even beg from Indra.

If you understand Real Truth, why have a teacher? When the disease is cured, what is the use of the doctor? When the water is crossed, what use is the boatman? What use is a sorcerer to a man without passions?

As long as an evil man is weak so long is he naturally good, like the waters of a river in autumn, which can be easily crossed by everyone.

Where store is made by the mouse, where the cat guards the butter, And the crow is the director of ceremonies--how could reliance be placed in such an arrangement?

If there is much discussion about anything all make boast of their skill, and as all wish to be placed foremost that gathering is brought to naught.

Copulation by day and sleeping by day, fresh beer, curds and young people drinking, sleeping with withered old women--these six waste the bodily strength.

He whose anger causes no fear, who, when pleased, can confer no benefit, who can neither destroy nor subjugate--what avails the anger of such a man?

The encounter with the time of misfortune and disease, a time of famine and danger from enemies, being at the king's gate or in Yama's abode--These are the common remedy i.e. affect all alike.

People strive for worldly things because they want them. It is not done for the sake of righteousness. Like the calf which, seeing that the milk is exhausted, leaves the cow at a distance.

Separation from the object of affection, the contempt of one's own people, to be much in debt, association with the evil, to be abandoned by friends who see your poverty, these five are not fire yet they burn the body.

He who, when small discords increase, does not attempt to make peace, is like the bee's honey leaking in drops, and the ruin of a country.

He who has knowledge is firm. The holy, even when destitute, do not discard moral virtues, although scorched by the sun's natural heat the natural cold of snow is not taken away.

Those who wish to terminate their sins believe in Buddha. Those who wish to terminate their earthly existences associate with the evil. Those who wish to terminate their families beget fools and idiots.

When cereals are to be consumed the stomach becomes heated.

Those blinded by desire do not perceive their sin. The blind man does not see the shape of things. The proud do not perceive their faults. He who regards himself the egotist does not perceive Real Truth.

A conqueror, a water channel, a creeping plant, women and the blind, these five, how they are led by the crafty! And this leading places them in the power of others.

The misery, which follows pleasure, is the pleasure, which follows misery. The happiness and misery of mankind revolve like a wheel.

The invisible appears before you and again becomes invisible. What is that of yours and what are you? Who will be miserable on that account?

Thus the logs of wood, which go down together to the great ocean are driven apart by every wave. Who will be miserable on that account?

The very wise man conquers rather by forcefulness than by anger. The evil man fails by being angry. Oh, evil men, defeated by defeat, how could you be called to the society of the wise?

A big stone, by a great effort, may be thrown to the top of a hill, but can be toppled over by a small effort. Our own faults and virtues are like this.

The man who, with regard to something, which is not to be done, meddles in the matter will surely come to grief, like the monkey, which turned out the child.

He who has entirely forsaken his own interests and rejoices in those of the other party will surely be destroyed. How such a man resembles King Rab-mar!

If an astronomer calculates from the sky he will ascertain the paths of the moon and the stars; but in his house the womenfolk are at variance, and he does not perceive their various misconduct.

The moon's color was apparent reflected in the unsullied water, and you wished to seize the lotus root. Oh, swan, who knew how to separate water and milk, what has become of your knowledge today?

Any man who has work, great or small, and desires to do it, and in this endeavor does his best, is considered to be doing a lion's work.

So, in protecting his kingdom and in overcoming his venturesome rivals, a king should not rely on his subjects but do it personally in this present life.

He who says to himself, 'who is the loved one and who the other, 'who acts affectionately, magnanimously and broadmindedly, such a man controls the whole earthly globe.

By always uttering pleasant speeches it is easy for a king to beguile his people. But as regards profitable words, which are like medicine, the speaker is rarer than the listener.

If you understand the purport of the doctrine as when the beam is at fault when weighing is done even if it was constructed by a reputed wise man it is better to let your own conviction be the winner.

If he is equal in wealth and ability, if he knows the essential vital point and is diligent, a follower of this kind is sure to injure you. No enemy will injure you as he will.

If fire is lighted in water how is it to be extinguished? If the fear comes from the protector who is there to protect you from this fear?

A drum when not adjusted, does not give forth-pleasant sounds. Even when adjusted the sound emitted is not sweet. The world is like a small drum. It should be so adjusted as to give forth a melodious sound.

The lord of the earth, being influenced by passionate desires, does not discriminate between benefit and injury. He conducts himself as he pleases, like a lust-maddened elephant. Tortured by remorse, he falls over the precipice of despondent misery. He blames those around and is ignorant of his own fault.

In a time of disputes a king, rather than acquire wealth, should preserve his life by abandoning property. Just as when the butcher shears the sheep's fleece the sheep thinks the sparing of its life to be a great gain.

When there is a snake at the root and an eagle above, monkeys climbing in the branches and the flowers surrounded by bees, where a resting place is provided for all savage animals, pay no heed to beware of such a sandalwood tree.

By whatever means you control your enemies it is not the physical ability but the method, which matters. See how the crow with the string of golden beads got the snake killed.

He who has understanding is mighty. What can you do with might without understanding? How strong the lion was, yet he was killed by the hare.

If you want to have proper method in your work consult those possessed of understanding. What need is there to speak of obtaining health, wealth and happiness? Even if you fail it will still look well.

The conduct of the morally virtuous is self-evident, but how can it cure evil persons? Like phlegm acidity, which is brought on by hot rough tasting condiments their evilness becomes very much increased.

The man against whom you feel anger in your heart is not to be admonished by words. Catch your enemy by the feet and then admonish him with the weapon of words.

In as far as danger has not been encountered in so far is danger to be feared. At the time of real danger it should be vanquished like a mistake, which is acknowledged.

As regards one who has imbibed the truth, is it clever to impose upon such a man? When a man is resting on the bamboo when a man is resting in the embraces of a beautiful woman what is brave about killing him?

Even when young, rejoice in the intense tranquility of the old. Be not proud of what you know, even when learned. However great your glory, be forbearing in your manner. However high you may rise, be not proud.

Those who ever delight to benefit all creatures are supreme like the lamp made from a jewel, which relies not on oil nor on the vessel nor on the wick for its light.

A doctor taking food and not digesting it, a king speaking falsehoods, and a man of good birth misbehaving himself, these three are very unbecoming.

By association with the exalted, who would not become exalted? The thread on which the flowers are strung as a garland is attached to the head.

He who preaches at the timely season and speaks when opportunity arises will be very much remarked and obtain worldly greatness.

He who is possessed of diligence, courage, might, wisdom, the power to subdue others, and perseverance, these six virtues, is feared even by the gods.

As regards your former enemy, now defeated, trust him not even when he wishes to become your friend. See how in the cave where the owls were gathered the raven lit a fire and they were burned.

Eating, sleeping, fearing and copulating--Man and the brutes are alike in these. By the practice of religion mankind is elevated if religion is not understood, is man not on a level with the brutes?

Those who speak ill of religion, although they go and come by day, are like the smith's bellows: they have breath but they are not alive.

Leaving the patron, Buddha, and bowing to other gods, is like a fool who comes to the bank of the Ganges and being thirsty digs a well.

Although you may remain in a country for a very long time it is absolutely certain that you will have to leave whatever may be the difference in the parting. The actual going cannot be avoided.

By compulsory separation excessive pain is infinitely caused to the mind. But if the giving-up is voluntary infinite peaceful happiness will be obtained.

One's desire is to be attractive and happy, and wealth is of course pleasant. But yet this world of existence is like a healthy drunken person being carried.

For living beings there is no moral defilement equal to lust. Nothing injures others as envy does, none is so fawning as a beggar, there is no friend or relative to equal generosity.

There is no eye like that of wisdom, there is no darkness like spiritual darkness, there is no enemy like disease, there is no danger to equal death.

Comparing these, the most inexorable is death, which will certainly come. Therefore let your mind be turned from desire and rejoice in the True Religion.

It is well to have this friend and that gem. The wishing gem is real-- stones are not gems. The topaz being treated as the best of gems, such a gem causes the ruin of the world.

Whatever there be on the earth's surface, grain, gold, cattle and good health, not all these will suffice to satisfy one man. If you understand this you will obtain tranquility.

Wealth, hoarded with great pains and fondled handled at intervals, how it resembles the starving mouse that hoards his store. Wealth is merely a source of misery.

Earthly life is not stable, wealth and enjoyment are not stable, wife and child are not abiding, therefore trust in religion and good reputation.

A king is not satisfied with great riches, a clever man is insatiable for elegant sayings, the ocean is never sated with water, the world has never enough of the sight of beauty, fire is not to be satisfied with wood, nor is it possible to satisfy a child's desires.

Moral conduct, self-restraint, and the control of the mind—whoever bears these earnestly in mind and remains so, then what more does he need?

If you remain utterly contented you are far from the plane of the evil man. Pleasures, which are bound by the ties of carnal desire, beget trouble at every step.

This so-called body, full of faults, has however one great moral quality. Whatever it encounters in this temporal life its movements depend upon the steersman--you.

The forest elephant is powerful although he lives on grass. The serpent, although he lives on air, is not lean. The ascetics who have only a little grass and fruit are not of the past do not die. Thus, modesty and contentment are the only objects of attainment.

Where is the solitary retreat where there is not vegetation and dustless water? The moon is the public light. What is the use of personal property?

The surest possession is real contentment. It is not difficult to earn your livelihood, whatever it may be. It is like places where there are grass, leaves and water. There is no place where these are not to be found.

The tiger is chief of the forest and the elephant is leader. Make of the grass your seat and your garments of tree-bark, and have the fruit of the trees for food. The evil society of poor relations is not real life.

The man who, either in a good or bad style, adapts himself somehow to what he has and continues to keep his body from impurity, what is the attraction of wealth to him?

With the price of great good actions the ship of your present body has been bought. So long as it is not wrecked, strive to cross the ocean of human misery.

For so long as the moon of pleasant times is waxing, and so long as Death, the planet Saturn, does not find you, so long live chastely and let your actions be right actions.

When your eyes are fixed in unconsciousness and you have come to your last breath through constant hiccoughing, as one led in the dark to a great precipice, of what assistance can child and wife be then?

He who yearns in pity, whose passions are controlled, who rejoices in contentment, who is passionless, rejoices at the general happiness, lives in the woods, eats fallen fruits, wears bark on his emaciated body, cries 'victor, victor' in the sweetest fashion to him who at Benares triumphed over the power of death, will yet have to discard this mortal body. Salvation is not to be found in believing in religious books not yet in freedom from bodily suffering.

If the thoughts are controlled by wisdom then salvation is very near. To get rid of the contamination of moral faults what is the use of shaving your head?

To him who has no covering for his mind what is the use of a cotton robe? He whose mind is imbued with compassion for all sentient beings, that is the way of salvation and divine wisdom. Ashes and long hair do not constitute the religious robe.

He who is subdued in the prime of life I know for a really subdued person. If all the senses were completely exhausted (i.e. by age) how could he possibly not be subdued?

Over friends and kindred in the burning place there comes a change when the smoke has dispersed. As regards that which always accompanies you, if you are convinced that it is your own works, then practice acts of virtue.

Wealth, acquired through great misery or by acts contrary to religion, or by bending before your enemy, such wealth is not proper wealth.

The holy man who is very firm in his longing to act nobly is always miserable through the fear of being decried in society. But the shameless man who spreads the root of perverse conduct, and does not discriminate between the proper and improper is happier on the whole.

He who has not the sense to distinguish between the proper and improper, who has abandoned all heed and observance of vows, who only wishes to be filled with good food, what difference is there between a rich man of this kind and the beasts?

The great source of virtues, both visible and invisible, is knowledge. Therefore, if you are striving to procure them take hold of wisdom in its entirety.

A hero is born among a hundred, a clever man is found among a thousand, but the wise hero in a hundred thousand may be born in a thousand or not at all.

By the wise all sciences will be studied even when they are past middle age. Although there may be no results in this life it will become easier for them to obtain such in another life.

Even when white-haired and wrinkled Learning from others should be treasured. Wherever the man of much learning may go he will not obtain the aggregate of learning.

A king and an accomplished man--these two are not alike. A king is esteemed in his own country; an accomplished man is esteemed everywhere.

Although the accomplished man have faults philosophers will not grieve. Although the moon may become spotted—stained--the firm look at it with pleasure.

There is no bodily ornament like accomplishments, there is no physical misery like mental worry, there is no protection for the body like patience, there is no relative or friend to equal charity.

Although the holy man may live far away His virtues act as a messenger. Through sniffing the perfume of the kitaka flower. The bees are attracted themselves.

If you are persevering in virtue what is the use of your haughty attitude? The cow, which has no milk, even if a bell be attached to it, will not be purchased.

Our existence is short but science is of many kinds. We may estimate life but we do not know how long it will be. So, like the swan, which separates milk from water, devote yourself to whatever you undertake.

Although many large stars are gleaming and the moon too shines as an ornament of the earth, yet whenever the sun sets it becomes night.

Except for the sun there is no meaning attached to the terms 'east' and 'west.'

On whatever it shines darkness is dispelled and light produced. The shining of the sun being supreme what is there in the shining of the other bodies?

The man who accomplishes one single act thoroughly excels all sentient beings--what need for many acts? As the moon, when full, lights the earth's surface--a great multitude of stars have not this power.

The growth of moral virtue depends on one's self. The acquisition of property depends on previous merit. Why blame anybody for this?

Moral virtues are to be obtained by making an effort, and as this effort rests with yourself, to say that others possess moral virtues--who could endure to lead such a life?

Of those who understand the meaning of the scriptures there are many even among the crippled. It is a matter for rejoicing to find the sharp pointed sword by which the enemy is conquered.

Rich men are to be found even among the barbarians and there are many heroes among the beasts, but holy men who can explain the various truths are the rarest of all.

There are not sandalwood trees on all hills, nor does one get pearls from all elephants. The learned who can explain the meaning of the real are not to be found everywhere.

Real Truth is a virtue to the talented but a harmful thing to those without talent. The water of the river is very free from impurity; but, entering the ocean, it becomes undrinkable.

The cultured delight in culture: the uncultured find no pleasure in it.

The bee is attracted from the forest by the lotus. The frogs, although living together, are not thus.

The fame of the sagacious increases among the sagacious themselves, as valuables among experts and heroes in battle.

The swan does not look well in an assemblage of hawks, nor the horse among the donkeys, nor the lion among the foxes, nor the clever man among fools.

That which is placed on their heads (i.e. respected) by the great may be considered merely as a basis by the vulgar.

Though possessing it themselves un-proclaimed while others have it in small measure, Holy men delight in such moral virtue. How remarkable is such conduct!

The virtues of the omniscient are comprehended only by the omniscient. The exact weight of the earth is known only to Ta-ye.

If people mutually advertise each other's virtues, even he who possesses none will acquire them. But he who proclaims his own virtues, even were he Indra, would not be respected.

There where the possession of learning is not respected why should the learned man go thither? In the city of the naked Jains what would the washer man do?

Alas, this stupid world has not obtained personal independence (i.e. initiative), but following (imitating) the doings of others is lost in the vessel of the unobstructed. Disappears--like a lump of copper in a vessel of molten copper.

Of the two, the buffoon and the clever man, to the fool the laughter maker is superior. The buffoon acquires wealth but the learned man goes empty-handed.

By means of various records of profitable meaning the sage passes his time. The indigence (consequent on) abandoning religion may be acquired even in sleeping.

He who in an assembly of many persons makes no effort to obtain the virtues of the holy, what is the profit in such a one being born who is driven away by his own mother's pains?

The way of the wise man is knowledge, the way of the cuckoo is a sweet note, the way of the ascetic is patience, the way of a woman is perversity.

Astronomy itself and doctrinal principles, the Eagle-spell and the repeating of spells, of these the essential meaning should be seized. Do not analyze the sound of the words.

Knowledge contained in books and wealth procured from others, when the time for needing them arrives, are neither knowledge nor wealth.

The accomplishments of the teacher of the arts are but accomplishments for earning a living, but the study of the termination of earthly incarnation why should that not be the accomplishment?

To no man without due scrutiny should sound advice be given. See, how for only giving a place to a monkey the man was made homeless.

Some devote themselves to speech preaching, some gain their object without speaking. The reed-flower has no fruit; the walnut has both flower and fruit.

The fruit of the kataka tree clears all water, but, if its name only be mentioned, This does not cause the mud in the water to subside.

Although a man may be learned in written works, yet if he does not apply what he knows then he resembles the blind man who even with a lamp in his hand cannot see the road.

Like the moon, which waxes and wanes, in having recourse to the holy or impious a little virtue may be increased or vast accomplishments may be decreased.

It is easier to have a clever man for one's enemy than to be friends with the stupid (unlearned)--as in the stories of the protection of the Brahmin by a thief and of the monkey who squeezed the king's eyes.

The clever, the disciplined, the contented and the truth-tellers, it is better for such to die than to live in the kingdom of the evil.

In the matter of a snake's venom and that of an evil man, An evil man is more venomous than a snake, For the snake's venom may be overcome by drugs and spells but what can soothe the venom of an evil man?

Although the evil may be benefited by a hundred talents yet, even when happy, they use abusive language. He who is well educated is firm. Although poor as a fakir he will not abandon virtue.

The naturally evil man is like the weighing scales--A little thing sends him up and a little thing sends him down.

Although smeared with sandalwood, musk and camphor the natural strong smell of garlic is not driven out. Although many texts may be well studied one does not drive out the natural evil in one's disposition.

There are no lotuses on the face of a holy man's son, nor do horns grow on the heads of prostitutes' sons. But in so far as there was perversion in the act in so far as is that the essential characteristic of the bastard.

The word which is uttered is one thing and different from the thought in the mind. Alas, then, for the crooked-minded! Who can change this natural disposition?

He assiduously retains his vices and ever discards the moral virtues. In retaining vice and discarding virtue the evil man resembles a strainer.

He who has been refuted by an evil man loses confidence even in the holy. When a child's mouth has been scalded by hot milk he will drink curds only after blowing on them.

Seeing the stars' reflection on the lake by night, the swan is disappointed in taking them for lotus shoots, so that even when he sees the real lotus shoot by day he will not eat it. When once refuted by a liar one will doubt even the truthful.

A woman's appetite is twice that of a man, her deceitfulness four times as much, and her shame six times, and her passions eight times--so it is said.

Not by gifts nor by attentions, not by worship or by veneration, not by constant association or by assiduity--by none of these is a woman to be resisted or controlled.

When he was carried off by the King of the Birds The White Lotus Serpent God said: "He who tells secrets to women "His life is lost there and then."

By them one's object and religion are completely destroyed, they create an obstacle in the attainment of salvation; they become the cause of all mischief. Rather therefore avoid other men's womenfolk.

If even one written verse of truth is given by a Lama to his pupil, the gift given would be supreme. Such a thing is not on earth.

All worldly pleasures should be abandoned, but, if you are unable to abandon them, then cling to the holy. That is the cure for it. All desires should be abandoned, but, if you cannot abandon them, let your desire be for salvation. That is the cure for it.

The unhelpful relative is like a stranger, But he who helps, even if he be an outsider, is a relative. Like the body and its diseases which are with us and the beneficial medicine of solitude.

If you hold, with assiduity, a pot half full of water on your head; so also if respected the evil man becomes excited angry.

Whatever may be agreeable to your mind, although it be far away is yet near. That which is not kept firmly in mind, although by your side is yet afar off.

Though we may live in the society of the impious there is no intimacy like the water and the lotus. The holy may ever live far apart, yet they rejoice like the moon and the water lily.

If you are ever desirous of friendship then do not do these three: laying wagers, money transactions, and speaking privily with women.

When milk is got from a horn, when the reed-flower drops honey, then, when a woman is true, the lotus will grow in dry ground.

A man possessed of very little moral merit, Even should he obtain abundance, knows not how to enjoy it, Like a dog on a lake of snow glacier, which when thirsty, licks with its tongue.

Those who do work in this world would not properly carry provisions for the journey without payment; but beggars and the poor, without it's being evident. Have a hundredfold profit in the future.

As we have to go, leaving wealth behind, therefore men give alms. As, even if you die your property is not lost, realize that giving alms is like the act of a clever miser economist.

Hesitating to impoverish themselves by charity, the miserly do not give alms. But this wealth being the real danger the learned man distributes his wealth.

From your food, why not give about half to the beggars? The desire and the reward which charity brings will be obtained at some time.

Although you may get no results from your actions, still do not be grieved, for you can still give alms from what you possess. Leaves, flowers, fruit, water and medicines, all these can ultimately be rendered inimitable by the power of mental dedication.

As regards wealth, which is devoid of charity and enjoyment (neither given away nor enjoyed), to be the owner of such wealth is to err. For although it is your own property why are you not the owner (or why don't you use it?)

Further, this is the place (lit. earth) for action; the beyond is the place for results. Whatever may be done here, that same will certainly be enjoyed there (i.e. the fruit).

The wealth, rank, beauty and health of others, why be grieved in seeing these here below? If you desire these, is not the getting of the fruits of work from the seed of virtuous action applicable to you too?

If you have possessions and do not distribute them, what is the use of keeping them by you? The fruit of the kimpaka may grow, but what is its use in hunger?

Whoever gives alms, which do not harm others--his various resulting pleasures will neither be carried away by water nor burned by fire nor stolen by thieves. Such possessions will never be utterly destroyed.

He who does not try a remedy for the disease of Hell (i.e. of the going to Hell), when he reaches the place where there is no medicine what will he do--he and his disease?

Holy men are seized by the snake of words, which comes from the pit of savage men. As a means of allaying this poison drink the medicine of wisdom and patience.

Although you may kill all your life long you will not exhaust the number of your enemies. But if your own anger be slain, that is to slay the real enemy.

The mighty are not amenable to reform, therefore why exercise patience with them. With, those who are disciplined and peaceful in conduct what necessity is there for patience?

If you are merely angry owing to an injury, then why not be angry with anger which obviously destroys religious aims and salvation?

He who, having seen the excellence of others, is afflicted by disturbance in his own mind, will not gain even a little of the Truth. Such a being destroys his own merit.

Let all hear this moral maxim, and having heard it keep it well: whatever is not pleasing to yourself do not that unto others.

As regards the leaving of this mortal life, who is not clever in knowing and speaking about it? But when it comes to practicing what they preach those who know would be considered wise among the sages.

Property is unstable, and youth perishes in a moment. Life is like being ever in the grinning fangs of Death. Yet mankind delays to obtain release from this world. Alas, the conduct of mankind is very surprising!

He who has a good intellect but is lazy; such a being will not become exalted. He is like a youthful writer who makes his calculations in the dust.

If all these human beings could perceive the God of Death on their own heads, even in food there would be no flavor. What need to mention other things?

The God of Death does not wait to ask whether your composite works are completed or not. Therefore do to-morrow's work today, and the evening's work in the morning.

So long as you are healthy and produce a harvest, which is not ruined by the great hail of disease, and so long as your intellect is in your work, all this is the time for heeding religious doctrines.

What are wreaths of flowers to donkeys and cattle? What is delicate food to quadrupeds and pigs? Light to the blind or songs to the deaf? Of what use is religious doctrine to fools?

So long as one is not ambitious For so long will one's accomplishments be great. If great ambition be entertained in the mind How can moral attainments be controlled?

So long as a man does not beg, even when the time comes, for so long is he styled a glorious ascetic. Brave, clever, of high rank and manly are the terms used of a man until he begs.

The first inventor of anything, how very wonderful and admirable he is!

The water mill having been made, can be managed even by a girl.

A sage's son may suitably die soon, and a king's son suitably live for a long time. For the hunter's son life and death are equally unsuitable, and for the saint's son equally convenient.

Then let that which exists in the beginning for the purpose of increasing man's understanding, let the elegant classics be expounded by the man who understands the doctrines.

Words of the nature of elegant sayings should be collected as far as convenient. For the temporary but supreme gift of words any price will be paid.

The student of science, the hero, and every beautifully formed woman, wherever they go acquire great fame, there and then.

A scientist and a king are not to be compared in any way. The king is esteemed in his own country. The wise man is esteemed wherever he goes.

He who is handsome, youthful, accomplished, and born of high caste, yet, like the flower of the violet-lac tree, does not look well when separated from his caste.

He who has a body but is devoid of learning, even though of good birth, what use is he? In the world reverence comes from learning. From lack of learning comes destruction.

If you desire ease, forsake learning. If you desire learning, forsake ease. How can the man at his ease acquire knowledge, and how can the earnest student enjoy ease?

He who is no friend of knowledge will always be in misery he who is a friend of knowledge will always obtain happiness.

What country is foreign to a sage? Who is hostile to a pleasant speaker? What load is heavy to a man in his own home? What distance is long to the energetic?

Since he who gives has friends, the summit of the king of mountains is not too high, the earth's profundities are not too deep, and even when sundered by the ocean it is not beyond his reach.

The superior man who has learned from books only, and has not studied things from many standpoints, resembles a pregnant girl of loose morals. He does not look well in an assemblage.

He who scorns the spiritual teacher (lit. Lama), who has given him even a single letter, will pass through a hundred dog-incarnations and be reborn of low caste.

To whomsoever a single letter is given by a Lama as to a pupil, whatever he may hand over in payment, there does, not exist sufficient wealth on the earth's surface to repay this.

He who brings one up, he who imparts elegant learning, he who imparts science, he who feeds one and gives fearlessness, these five are declared to be like fathers.

The wife of a king or of a minister, likewise the wife of a friend, a brother's wife, and one's own mother, these five are declared to be like mothers.

Counsel given to fools excites but does not pacify them. He who pours out milk for a snake is only increasing its venom.

The fool, who is really a two-footed brute, should be specially avoided, for, like the unseen thorn, the pain of his words hurts.

If a fool sees a fool he is more refreshed by this than by sandalwood. If he sees a learned man he regards him as a parricide.

As regards benefiting the evil, whatever you may do they are not grateful; but if you do even a small service to a holy man, for this he is yours to command for life.

All the doings of fools are like ripples on water quickly effaced. The doings of a holy man are like a carving on stone. They may be small but they are permanent.

Though the evil man may speak sweetly, yet he is not to be trusted. The peacock has a sweet note, but for food it eats powerful poison.

Alas, the evil man and Phlegm (or mucous) are really alike. By mildness they are excited and by roughness (or astringent) they are soothed.

An evil man, gold, a drum, a wild horse, women and cloth are all controlled by beating. These are not vessels for elegant doings.

Association with the evil man is unbecoming. Whether he be pleasant or obnoxious. As with a dog--it is unbecoming whether you play with him or let him lick you.

Wildness is worse than a serpent. A serpent's venom can be assuaged by drugs and spells wildness is not to be assuaged by anything.

The sins of the unruly (the undisciplined) leave their mark on the temperament. Whosoever mixes with the unruly becomes even more unruly than they.

Even without noticing his father's conduct the son imitates him. From the kitaka tree one does not get the kurura fruit.

If my father, mother, own brother and wife imitate me in whatever sin I commit, it is as if I had committed it.

This earth, the mighty ocean and the mountains are not a burden, but he who is ungrateful is indeed a heavy burden.

He who stays in the society of those of good moral behavior rejoices to benefit all evil spirits elementals. Although Yama is the destroyer, yet wise men praise him very much.

In the society of the clever, the disciplined, the contented, and the truthful, imprisonment is a superior state. The sovereignty of the unruly is not thus.

Intimacy in the society of the holy, conversation in the society of the learned, and the friendship of the unselfish, these will cause no regrets.

Although for a very long time you may not perceive the misery caused by sin in this world and the other world, yet bring your mind into harmony with religion.

Although a thing may afford you mental enjoyment, yet, if the full fruition is to be injurious, how can it be right? If anything upsets your health how could it be right to eat such a sweet dish?

That which hurts but is profitable is drunk by the wise like medicine. The result, attained afterwards, becomes in itself incomparable.

If a learned king summarizes the meaning of this book in the beginning, the middle and the end, it will be found to be not otherwise than stated.

When the ocean shall be no more it may be crossed in the middle, so they say. Whether holy men exist or not we should not transgress the moral codes.

