

Dhammapada

The Path of Truth

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

(Ch. 23) Nāga-Vagga

The Elephant¹ Chapter

(320)

aham nāgo va saṅgāme, cāpato patitaṃ saraṃ.

ativākyam titikkhissam, dussilo hi bahujjano.

I, like an elephant in battle struck by an arrow from a bow,

Will endure criticism from the immoral multitude.

(321)

dantaṃ nayanti samitiṃ, dantaṃ rājābhirūhati.

danto seṭṭho manussesu, yotivākyam titikkhati.

One who is trained can be led through a crowd;

One who is trained can be mounted by a king.

The best among humans is one who is trained,

One who endures criticism.

(322)

varamassatarā dantā, ājānīyā ca sindhavā.

kuñjarā ca mahānāgā, attadanto tato varam.

Excellent are well-trained mules, thoroughbred Sindhu horses, and royal elephants;

But more excellent than those is one who is self-trained.

(323)

na hi etehi yānehi, gaccheyya agataṃ disaṃ.

yathāttanā sudantena, danto dantena gacchati.

For it is not with such transportation that one can go where one has never gone;

Where one who is well-trained, self-trained, can go.

(324)

dhanapālo nāma kuñjaro, kaṭukabhedano dunnivārayo.

baddho kabaḷaṃ na bhuñjati, sumarati nāgavanassa kuñjaro.

The elephant Dhanapāla, bitter about his separation, is hard to restrain;

In captivity he does not eat, as he misses the elephant-forest.

(325)

middhī yadā hoti mahagghaso ca, niddāyitā samparivattasāyī.

mahāvarāhova nivāpapuṭṭho, punappunam gabbhamupeti mando.

One who is hazy-minded and gluttonous, drowsy, sleeping fitfully,

Like an oversized pig devouring the bait, the fool comes again and again to the womb.

1 Nāga. This can mean "elephant," "dragon," or "powerful being."

(326)

**idaṃ pure cittamacāri cārikam, yenicchakam yatthakāmaṃ yathāsukhaṃ.
tadajjaham niggaheṣāmi yoniso, hatthippabhinnaṃ viya añkusaggaho.**

*In the past this mind would wander about,
Going wherever it wished, wherever it desired, wherever it found pleasure.
Today I will carefully restrain it, like an elephant-trainer a rampaging elephant.*

(327)

**appamādaratā hotha, sacittamanurakkhatha.
duggā uddharathattānaṃ, pañke sannova kuñjaro.**

*Take delight in vigilance, and in guarding one's own mind!
Lift yourself up from the harmful path, as an elephant from the mud.*

(328)

**sace labhetha nipakam sahāyaṃ, saddhiṃ caraṃ sādhuvihāridhiraṃ.
abhibhuyya sabbāni parissayāni, careyya tenattamano satimā.**

*If you acquire a prudent companion to travel with,
One who lives an excellent life, who is steadfast and wise,
Having left behind all risks, go with them, satisfied and mindful.*

(329)

**no ce labhetha nipakam sahāyaṃ, saddhiṃ caraṃ sādhuvihāridhiraṃ.
rājāva raṭṭhaṃ vijitaṃ pahāya, eko care mātaṅgaraññeva nāgo.**

*If you do not acquire a prudent companion to travel with,
One who lives an excellent life, who is steadfast and wise,
Then like a king leaving behind his conquered kingdom,
Go alone, like an elephant in the forest.*

(330)

**ekassa caritaṃ seyyo, natthi bāle sahāyatā.
eko care na ca pāpāni kayirā, appossukko mātaṅgaraññeva nāgo.**

*It is best to go alone; there is no companionship with a fool.
One who lives alone and does nothing harmful will be at ease,
Like an elephant in the forest.*

(331)

**atthamhi jātamhi sukhā sahāyā, tuṭṭhī sukhā yā itarītareṇa.
puññaṃ sukhaṃ jīvitasāṅkhayaṃ, sabbassa dukkhassa sukhaṃ pahānaṃ.**

*It is pleasant to have companions when the need arises,
It is pleasant to be content with whatever comes,
It is pleasant to have merit with life comes to an end,
It is pleasant to cast aside all dissatisfaction.*

(332)

**sukhā matteyyatā loke, atho petteyyatā sukhā.
sukhā sāmāññatā loke, atho brahmaññatā sukhā.**

*Pleasant it is to be a mother in this world; pleasant it is to be a father.
Pleasant it is to be a contemplative in this world; pleasant it is to be holy.*

(333)

sukhaṃ yāva jarā sīlaṃ, sukhā saddhā patitṭhitā.

sukho paññāya paṭilābho, pāpānaṃ akaraṇaṃ sukhaṃ.

Pleasant is virtue, as long as one lives;

Pleasant is faith, when solidly established;

Pleasant is virtue when attained,

Pleasant is refraining from all that is harmful.