

Buddhist and Christian Parallels

Compiled from the Earliest Scriptures

by

René Salm

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Mt. 19:19

As a mother at the risk of her life
Watches over her own child, her only child,
So let one cultivate a loving heart
Towards all beings.

Sn 149

Eugene, Oregon
Kevalin Press, 2004

• *For free distribution* •

Buddhist citations of the Dīgha, Majjhima, and Samyutta Nikāyas are from *The Teachings of the Buddha* (Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1987, 1995, 2000); citations of the Anguttara and Khuddaka Nikāyas are from the Pali Text Society editions (London, 1932-48).

Canonical Biblical citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Noncanonical citations are from *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. W. Schneemelcher (Louisville, 1990)

“Future historians will consider the meeting of Buddhism and Christianity at their deepest levels as the most important single event of this century.”

-- Arnold Toynbee (ca. 1960)

“The sacred books of the early Buddhists have preserved for us the sole record of the only religious movement in the world’s history which bears any close resemblance to early Christianity.”

-- T.W. Rhys Davids

Preface

Thirty years ago, as a young American college graduate, I first read in the Buddhist scriptures and felt the grandeur and thrill of these writings at once strange yet strangely familiar. Persons and places bore curious names, references were mystifying, and even the English translations were unidiomatic, stilted, and abstruse. However, a sublime cadence resonated through those verses, unassuming and unhurried, as limpid and refreshing as a cool mountain stream.

For the next twenty years it was my joy to rest beside this stream, reading in the Buddhist scriptures twice daily, the first thing in the morning and the last at night. Thus, my days seemed secured between two powerful supports. Eventually, twenty volumes of Buddhist scriptures lay closed on the shelf, annotated with comments, references, and parallels to the Christian scriptures.

Over the years, it has become clear to me—as it has to some others—that, like two paths to one summit, both the Christian and the Buddhist traditions announce fulfillment through love, renunciation, effort, meekness, and purity. The two scriptural traditions radiate the same brilliance, bestow the same refreshment, and resonate with the same eternal cadence.

“Let those who have ears to hear, listen!” said the Christ. “I proclaim a teaching,” said the Buddha, “that is thoroughly beneficial—in its beginning, in its middle, and in its ending.” It is my hope that this work may help us hear this beneficial teaching, that we might refresh ourselves in this stream of Truth so eloquently proclaimed by these two great Revealers.

René Salm
January 2004

Contents

Foreword by Lindsay Falvey, PhD

Introduction

1. On Love
2. On Giving
3. On Service
4. The Peacemaker
5. Contrary Laws
6. The Two Paths
7. The Difficult Way
8. Not of the World
9. “The Kingdom of God is Within You”
10. Life Unseen
11. On Renunciation
12. The True Conquest
13. Satisfied with Little
14. On Poverty
15. On Homelessness
16. The Emptiness of Wealth
17. On Riches
18. On Ostentation
19. On Empty Learning
20. The Rain Falls On All
21. The Commandments
22. On Adultery
23. On Stealing
24. On Killing
25. On Lying
26. Honoring One’s Parents
27. Karma, or The Golden Rule
28. On Defilement
29. Inner Cleansing
30. Poor and Good Soil
31. Seed/Tree and Fruit
32. Hidden Made Manifest
33. Physical and Spiritual Injury
34. True Relatives
35. On Works
36. Finding Fault in Others
37. Offending the Innocent
38. on Anger
39. The Spiritually Dead
40. On Repentance
41. On Meekness
42. The Holy Sufferer

- 43. On Watchfulness
- 44. On Speech
- 45. On Succinct Speech
- 46. Entrapment with Words
- 47. The Sending of the Disciples
- 48. The Companion
- 49. Parables of Accomplishment
- 50. A Haven of Rest
- 51. Spiritual Perception
- 52. Let Your Light Shine
- 53. With All One's Being
- 54. On Perfection
- 55. The Passer-by
- 56. The Truth Will Make You Free
- 57. The Beneficial Teaching
- Appendix: The Way*
- Index of citations

Abbreviations

Buddhist citations:

A	Anguttara Nikāya
D	Dīgha Nikāya
Dh	Dhammapada
DhC	Chinese Dhammapada
It	Itivuttaka
M	Majjhima Nikāya
S	Samyutta Nikāya
ThG	Theragāthā
Ud	Udāna
Uv	Udānavarga

Christian citations:

Jn	Gospel of John
Lk	Gospel of Luke
Mk	Gospel of Mark
Mt	Gospel of Matthew
POxy	Papyrus Oxyrhynchus
Th	Gospel of Thomas

Foreword

Rarely are we offered the considered insights of a fellow searcher expressed in the spiritual language of the great traditions. This is what we are offered here—insights of essential truths expressed in two ancient cultural forms. One form, the Christian gospels, is familiar at varying levels of consciousness to most of us in the West; the other is the scriptures of Buddhism, the fastest growing religion in the West.

In presenting sections of scriptures from Buddhism and Christianity that exhibit similar or the same intent, René Salm is offering us the most special gift of spiritual guidance. He has ‘tested these in his own experience’ as the Buddha taught, rather than accepting common or cultural interpretations simply because they have been handed down by elders. The Parallels are not simply scriptures that have the same literal meaning, though they may in many cases, but are René’s own experience of a unified essence.

We may understand the compilation as a fulfillment of A.N. Whitehead’s observation that...

The Buddha gave his doctrine to enlighten the world: Christ gave his life. It is for Christians to discern the doctrine. Perhaps in the end the most valuable part of the doctrine of the Buddha is its interpretation of [Jesus’] life. But we may also understand it as more; for the expansion of Buddhism in the West has brought with it cultural accretions that are no more consistent with the Buddha’s teachings than teachings of a post-mortem geographical heaven are consistent with Jesus’ insights. Thus René is a guide not only to those of us who find spiritual encouragement in such parallels, but also to both Buddhist and Christian practitioners who struggle to reconcile their own inner feelings with their tradition’s dogma.

The humble presentation of The Parallels eschews the usual exegetical approach. Occasional footnotes assist with some original meanings, but it is chapter headings and their sequence that provide the primary cue to the spiritual meanings that René has seen. From these two factors alone, one might attempt a sequential guide to truth; but René has understood that we must each experience the essence ourselves rather than read other’s distillations, and I therefore offer nothing more beyond gratitude for his act of loving-kindness.

Appended to the collation is ‘The Way,’ René’s personal summary of his steps along the path. I am particularly pleased that he agreed to include this as a further guide of the way that has been indicated by true prophets across traditions and ages. To ponder The Parallels is to open ourselves to that Way, our own Way—so, may we all take our own first steps and so allow our own Way to become ever clearer.

Lindsay Falvey, Ph.D

Introduction

These short chapters consist of raw excerpts from the sublime bodies of Buddhist and Christian scriptures, accompanied by occasional footnotes. To compare these two great religious traditions in this way is admittedly hazardous, for a short excerpt without context can only hint at a meaning, and often enough it will be a wrong meaning. Yet I believe that the task before all of us as seekers of truth is to wrestle with potential meanings, to sort out the most important questions of life for ourselves, and to determine what is and what is not correct. Much of the material herein will be new to westerners unfamiliar with the Pali Buddhist scriptures, and thus these chapters offer a novel approach to our Christian heritage. Yet, if the premise behind this work is valid, neither Christian nor Buddhist need feel a stranger to the other's tradition.

At least twice in the history of mankind the truth has been discovered and proclaimed by individuals who, simply put, refused to live in the state of ignorance, the state in which all are born. From their dual proclamations the ancient and venerable traditions of Buddhism and Christianity grew. Between India and the Levant lay a formidable distance in miles, and more formidable differences in language, history, culture, and outlook. Between the Buddha and the Christ lay five hundred years. Yet to recognize the differences between these two as superficial, and the resemblances as vital, is a signal step along the path to understanding.

Those inured to traditional Buddhism or Christianity may have difficulty accepting these parallels, whether in a few cases or generally on principle. Followers of the two religions who have uncritically accepted their own heritage will experience similar difficulty. Nevertheless, there will be some who are able to perceive the essence of these comparisons, at once astonishing and compelling. To them this work is dedicated. I do not try to persuade, but present what I consider fundamental similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, similarities which have emerged during three decades of meditation and study. This is a personal work, and were another to draw up a set of Buddhist and Christian parallels (as has been done a number of times), that person would no doubt select different texts, order them otherwise, and produce a variant apparatus of notes.

There is no account of miracles in these pages, nor of the supernatural (e.g. apparitions or bodily resurrection). Rather, we encounter sayings of two exemplary teachers who were at once ideal in their perfection and at the same time thoroughly human. Jesus knew hunger and "had nowhere to lay his head" (Mt 8:20), while the Buddha—far from wandering majestically in the company of five hundred monks (as tradition portrays)—could be reviled as a beggar, mocked, and denied food on his alms-rounds. These Masters lived on the fringes of society and voluntarily renounced ordinary social ties. They taught others the pre-eminent value of doing likewise, and that what is worthy can be found neither in expected places nor on the well-trodden path. Indeed, the Truth is quite contrary to what the world supposes (cf. Chp. 5). During their lifetimes the remarkable significance of the 'Buddha' and the 'Christ' was not recognized, and it took a number of generations for their lives and teachings to become generally appreciated. During that long and complex process a good deal of re-interpretation and adjustment of the original message took place, a process during which it was adapted to the requirements of society at large and of mainstream religious institutions—long after the lives of the founders had been quite forgotten and replaced by caricatures calculated to awe and subdue.

A glance at the table of contents shows that these parallels are primarily ethical and sapiential. This reflects my view that religion essentially deals with the gaining of wisdom and with how one

may better conduct one's life in order to become happy and wise. The Buddha and the Christ taught that wisdom and ethics go hand-in-hand. Contrary to present Christian and much Mahayana Buddhist doctrine, the founders taught that only through his or her own effort can the individual attain enlightenment / the Kingdom of Heaven. Even the founders themselves cannot do the work for us, and they never claimed such power. There is no place in authentic Buddhism or Christianity for the doctrines of redemption, atonement, grace, faith, predestination, the notion of an all-powerful deity, or the agency of an intermediary who intercedes on our behalf (angel, saint, Bodhisattva, Buddha, or Son of God). On the contrary, each person is fully capable of doing what needs to be done, and the core teaching of Gautama and of Jesus is that each one of us needs to get about doing what s/he was born to do. In both cases this is a religion of seeking and finding, of effort leading to gnosis. In the West, this message—the authentic message of Jesus—was early made heretical and replaced by the religion of redemption. In the East, seeking and finding gnosis are the very essence of Buddhism.

Buddhists and Christians conclude that their religions are *fundamentally* incompatible, while the truth is that they are *superficially* incompatible. Buddhists correctly point to the facts that the core of their religion lies in the doctrine of non-self, *anatta*, and that Buddhism is atheistic. Christians point to the Nicene creed: Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God, he is the inimitable Lord and Savior of the world. Yet Jesus seems to have spoken very little of “God,” and certainly not approvingly of the good creator God of his received Jewish heritage. For him, the “ruler” of the world was not to be worshipped at all but to be cast out (Jn 12:31, etc.), even as the “beam” is to be cast out of one's own eye that one might see clearly (Mt 7:5). It is no great inference to suggest that the ruler of this world is nothing other than ignorance itself. This, of course, agrees with Buddhist metaphysics. For Jesus, “God” is saving Truth or gnosis (the Buddhist “Enlightenment,” the Christian “Kingdom of Heaven”).

Jesus was a Hebrew by blood but not a Jew in belief. The scriptures show that he repudiated the exclusivity of the chosen people, the rites and rituals of Jewish Law, and the alleged covenantal status between the Jewish people and *their* God. He devalued the creator God, nature itself (Mk 8:36; Jn 18:36), and the body (“the flesh profiteth nothing,” Jn 6:63)—tenets much more at home in the inward-looking milieu of Vedism-Buddhism than in the outward, pragmatic orientation of either Judaism or Hellenism. Such tenets are, in fact, odious to normative Judaism and to the Hellenistic culture that has provided the basic framework of Western civilization to this day—a framework that has nurtured orthodox Christianity. Such vital aspects of Jesus' theology were early suppressed, relegated to heresy, and eventually misconstrued or even caricatured. Among the authentic Jesus-doctrines to fall by the wayside was the difficult idea of not-self, thoroughly foreign, even repugnant, to the West. Yet *anatta* is entirely compatible with Jesus' insistence upon losing one's life (Mk 8:35), upon breaking all attachments (Mt 10:37), upon attaining heaven through emptying (cf. Th 97 and the Buddhist concept of *suññata*), upon casting away what is unworthy (Mt 13:44–6), and upon Jesus' insistence that the Kingdom is unseen and not of this world (Chp 10; Lk 17:20; Jn 3:7).

This work will challenge preconceptions in a number of ways. It is designed for meditation rather than cursory reading. If *Buddhist and Christian Parallels* prompts an examination of the reader's religious convictions, exploration of his and her religious heritage, and a deepening commitment to one's personal quest for truth, it will have more than justified its existence. These were, in fact, the very goals that motivated the teaching of Buddha and Jesus. They were not so much interested in explicating doctrine as in showing ordinary people the Way to wisdom, fulfillment and happiness. It has been my endeavor to outline that Way in these pages.

– R. S.

1. On Love

B1 As a mother at the risk of her life
Watches over her own child, her only child,
So let one cultivate a loving heart
Towards all beings.

Sn 149

B2 Conquer anger by love
Conquer evil by good
Conquer greed by giving
Conquer lies by truth.

Dh 223

B3 Brethren, these things are memorable,
endearing, praiseworthy, and conduce to
helpfulness, peace, harmony, and unity.
What are they?
One serves others with deeds that are full of
love, openly and when not seen.
One serves others with words that are full of
love, openly and when not seen.
One serves others with thoughts that are full
of love, openly and when not seen.

M 48.6

B4 Brethren, I see no other single thing
that stops the arising of hatred,
or if already arisen causes its abandoning,
as a heart freed through love.
In a heart conscientiously freed through love,¹
hatred does not arise,
or if already arisen it is abandoned.

A 1.2.4

C1 “I give you a new commandment:
love one another.
As I have loved you,
so also should you love one another.
By this will all know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.”

Jn 13:34-35

C2 “This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

Jn 15:12-13

C3 “You shall love your neighbor
as yourself.”

Mt 19:19

C4 “Therefore all things that you desire be done to
you, so also do to others, for this is the Law and
the Prophets.”

Mt 7:12

C5 “Let him with two coats give
to him who has none,
and let whoever has food do likewise.”

Mk 3:11

¹ *a heart freed through love*. This concept occurs often in the Buddhist scriptures. The loving heart is ‘freed’ from suffering because it experiences no remorse—it is freed from unwholesome karma. Cf. B8, and Chp. 27.

1. On Love

B5 “He insulted me! He beat me!
He defeated me! He cheated me!”
By nursing such thoughts
hatred never ends.

“He insulted me! He beat me!
He defeated me! He cheated me!”
By abandoning such thoughts
hatred ends.

For through hatred never does hatred cease
By love alone does it end
This is an eternal law.

Dh 3-5

B6 [One may be] humble, peaceful, and loving
So long as abuse comes not one's way
Only when abused is it truly seen
If one is humble, peaceful, and loving.
M 21.10

B7 Brethren, love frees the heart when it is
cultivated, increased, deepened, made second
nature, made basic, kept in mind, continually
practiced, and carried through. The heart freed
by love gives eight advantages:

Happy one sleeps with no bad dreams
And happy one awakes.
By humans beloved, to animals dear
Neither fire, poison, nor sword draws near.
And if the highest remains out of reach
A better world is here.

A 8.1.1

C 6. “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire
mercy and not sacrifice.’”

Mt 9:13

C 7. “But I say to you that listen, Love your
enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you, pray for those
who abuse you. To one who strikes you on
the cheek, offer the other also; and from one
who takes away your coat, do not withhold
even your shirt. Give to all who ask of you,
and from one who takes away what is yours,
do not demand it back. As you wish others do
to you, so also do to them.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is
that to you? For even sinners love those who
love them. And if you do good to those who
do good to you, what credit is that to you?
For even sinners do the same. If you lend to
those from whom you hope to receive, what
credit is that to you? Even wrongdoers lend
to wrongdoers, that they may receive in kind.
But love your enemies, do good, and lend
hoping for nothing in return. Great will be
your reward, and you will be children of the
Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful
and to the wicked. So be merciful, just as
your Father is merciful.”

Lk 6:27-36

C8. “Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from
the foundation of the world. For I was hungry
and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you
gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you
welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed
me, I was sick and you watched over me, I
was in prison and you visited me.”

Mt 25:34-36

1. On Love

B8 “Now, what do you think, brethren? If a child cultivates heart-liberating love from early youth, would he do any wicked deed?”

“Surely not, sir.”

“Not doing any wicked deed, would remorse befall him?”

“Surely not, sir. How can remorse befall such a one?”

“So it is, brethren, that liberation of the heart through love should be cultivated, whether by a woman or by man.”

A 10.21.9

B9 Even if, brethren, thugs were to sever you limb-by-limb with a tree-saw, if you were then to give your hearts over to hatred you would not be following my teaching.

So should you train yourselves: “Our minds will not become unsettled, evil words will not come out of our mouths, we will remain compassionate for their welfare, without hatred and with loving hearts. Beginning with them, we will abide suffusing the whole world with love, which is full, boundless, untouched by enmity and ill-will.”

This, brethren, is how you should train yourselves.

M 21.20

C 9. And one of the scribes overheard their discussion, and seeing that [Jesus] answered them well, he approached and asked him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

Jesus answered, “The first is ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your spirit, and with all your mind, and with all your power.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Then the scribe said to him, “Excellent, teacher! According to truth have you said that God is one, and there is none other besides him, and to love him with all one’s heart, and with all one’s intelligence, and with all one’s spirit, and with all one’s strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself— this is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus saw that he answered wisely he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

And no one dared question him further.

Mk 12:28-34

1. On Love

B10 Good results from an unspoiled heart,
even if one love but a single being.

But he who is compassionate to all, a
Noble One,¹ heaps up boundless merit.

Whoever develops unbounded love
destroys the sources of bondage.

They conquered the earth's teeming
multitudes, those royal holy men² of old, and
sacrificed profusely— the Offering of Horse,
the Human Sacrifice, The Drink of Truth, the
Elixir of Good Fortune³— But like countless
stars next to a brilliant moon, their acts
together did not amount to the sixteenth part of
a heart well cultivated by love.

A 8.1.1

B11 Let us live in joy
Without hate among those who hate!
Among those who hate
Let us live in love!

Dh 197

C 10. “A certain man was going down from
Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers
who stripped him, inflicted wounds on him, and
went away leaving him half dead. It so happened
that a certain priest was going down that road,
and when he saw him he passed by on the
opposite side. So likewise a Levite, when he
came to the place and saw him passed by on the
opposite side. Then a traveling Samaritan
approached, and seeing him was moved with
compassion. He went to him and bandaged his
wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. Then he
put him on his own beast, brought him to an inn
and took care of him. On departing the next day
he took out two denarii, gave them to the
innkeeper and told him, ‘Take care of him, and
whatever more you might spend, I’ll reimburse
you when I come back.’ Which of these three do
you suppose was neighborly to the man who fell
among robbers?”

He said, “The one who treated him with
compassion.”

Jesus said, “Go, and you do likewise.”

Lk 10:30-37

C 11. Jesus said:
“Love you brother like your soul,
watch him like the pupil of your eye.”

Th 25

¹ *ariyo*.

² *rāgisayo*.

³ The last two rites are obscure and may be one and the same. Soma was an unidentified plant whose (probably hallucinogenic) juice was filtered through sheep's wool and then diluted with milk and water. It was offered to the gods and then drunk together by the Vedic priests and the sacrificer. These rites hark back to the dawn of history.

2. On Giving

B1 How blessed a thing, dear sir, is it to give!
Indeed, blessed is the gift though from a
scanty store. Some from their paltry means
bestow their mite, some of their plenty have
no wish to give. The offerings given from a
scanty source, measured, with gifts of
thousand pieces rank. S 1.4.3

B2 Righteous his act who, though he live by
scraps gleaned here and there, though he
maintain a wife, yet from his scanty store
finds gift to give. A thousand donors'
hundred thousand [gifts] are not in value
equal to his mite. S 1.4.2

B3 Giving without taking mind is great in fruit,
For living things such meritorious deeds are
sure footing in another world. A 5.4.6

B4 "But what, father, is the noble duty of a
righteous monarch?"¹
"This, dear son: that you, depending on
Dhamma, honoring, respecting, and revering
it, should provide the right watch, ward, and
protection for your own people, for the army,
for the nobles, for vassals, for priests and
householders, for town and country dwellers,
for the religious world, and for beasts and
birds. Throughout your kingdom let no
wrongdoing prevail. And whoever in your
kingdom is poor, to him let wealth be given.
D 26.5

B5 Brethren, in giving a meal, a giver gives
five things to a beggar. What five? He gives
beauty, ease, strength, and wit. But in giving
these he becomes a partaker in each quality,
in heaven and among men. A 5.4.7

C 1 Having sat down opposite the treasury,
Jesus watched the multitude putting money
into the treasury. Many rich people put in
large sums. And a poor widow came and put
in two mites, which make a penny. He
summoned his disciples and said to them,
"Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put
in more than all those who are contributing to
the treasury. For they all gave out of their
abundance, but she in her destitution has
given everything she had, her whole living."
Mk 12:41-44

C2 "Beware of giving alms in front of men in
order to be seen, for then you won't receive
any reward from your Father who is in
heaven. So, when you give alms, don't sound
a trumpet as do the hypocrites in the
synagogue and in the street, in order to be
honored by men. Truly I say to you, they
have received their reward. But when you
give alms, don't let your left hand know what
your right hand is doing, so that your gifts
may be in secret. And your Father, who sees
in secret, will himself openly reward you."
Mt 6:1-4

C3 A certain aristocrat asked him, "Good
teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal
life?" Jesus said, "Why do you call me good?
None is good except one: God. You know the
commandments: you shouldn't commit
adultery, you shouldn't kill, you shouldn't
steal, you shouldn't bear false witness, honor
your father and your mother." He said, "I've
observed all of these since I was a child."
Hearing this, Jesus said, "You lack just one
thing: sell all you have and give to the poor,
and you'll have treasure in heaven. And
come, follow me." Hearing these things he
became very sad, for he was extremely rich.
Seeing him thus saddened Jesus said, "How
difficult it is for those who have riches to
enter the kingdom of God! For it's easier for
a camel to go through the eye of a needle,
than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of
God."
Lk 18:18-25

¹ A story from the early Buddhist tradition. The king
abdicates the throne and will don the robes of a homeless
monk. In Indian tradition he thus enters the highest stage
of life, the dedicated spiritual quest for enlightenment. The
king explains to his son that ideal government is based
upon the *Dhamma*, and provides for all, even the least in
the kingdom.

3. On Service

B1 “Suppose a sick and ailing man, grievously ill, were to go along the highway— it might be with no village near ahead or near behind—unable to get proper food, to get proper medicine, to get proper attention, to get a guide to some village boundary; and suppose another man, also going along the road, were to see him; verily it might raise pity in that man, raise compassion, raise commiseration, so that he might say to himself: ‘Alas for this man! He ought to have proper food, proper medicine, proper attention; he ought to have a guide to some village.’ Wherefore? Lest he suffer even here wasting and destruction.

“Just so, sirs, regarding one whose ways are impure, who obtains no mental clarity, mental calm—truly, for such a person pity ought to arise, compassion ought to arise, commiseration ought to arise that prompts one to say to oneself, ‘Alas for this person! He should give up bad habits in act, in speech, in thought, and develop good habits.’ Why? Lest that person on the breaking up of the body, after death, arise in the wayward way, the ill way, the abyss, hell.”¹

A 5.17.2

C 10. “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers who stripped him, inflicted wounds on him, and went away leaving him half dead. It so happened that a certain priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the opposite side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him passed by on the opposite side. Then a traveling Samaritan approached, and seeing him was moved with compassion. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him. On departing the next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper and told him, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you might spend, I’ll reimburse you when I come back.’ Which of these three do you suppose was neighborly to the man who fell among robbers?”

He said, “The one who treated him with compassion.”

Jesus said, “Go, and do likewise.”

Lk 10:30-37

¹ Both the Buddhist passage and the famous Christian parable of the Good Samaritan focus on the need for service. In the Buddhist citation the ailing man on the road should receive proper attention, but here physical service is the model for spiritual service—the impure person should also receive compassion. Why? Because the impure person is imprisoned by his own bad karma, whose negative effects are unavoidable (Chp. 27, and *On Love* B4, B8).

This passage—along with so much of Buddhist scripture—was finalized centuries after the Buddha’s passing. In the last sentence it incorporates at least one prominent element reflecting popular Indian culture, an element taken over by the later *sangha* (order) of monks—the belief in rebirth. In fact, rebirth is incompatible with the Buddha’s central doctrine of non-self, *anatta*. That doctrine teaches (Chp. 27, etc.) that one suffers for one’s actions now, in this very life, not after death. The scriptures show that the Buddha himself avoided useless speculations on what may or may not occur after death.

3. On Service

B2 Once one of the monks had a severe case of cholic and lay prostrate in his own filth. At that time the Master was making rounds of the sleeping quarters with Ananda, and came to the place where the monk lay...

"What ails you?" asked the Master. "I have cholic, Lord." "Have you anyone to care for you?" "No, Lord." "Why do the monks not wait on you?" "Because, Lord, I am useless to the monks."

The Master then said, "Ananda, bring some water so that we might bathe this monk." "Yes, sir," answered Ananda, and brought water. The Master then poured the water over the monk, and Ananda washed him. The Master took him by the head, and Ananda by the feet, and they lifted him up and placed him on his bed.

Then the Master called all the monks together and asked them: "Is there, monks, in such-and-such a place, a monk who is ill?" "There is, Lord." "What ails him, monks?" "He has cholic." "Does he have anyone to take care of him?" "No, Lord." "Why do the monks not wait on him?" "He is useless to the monks, Lord. Therefore, they don't wait on him."

"Monks, you have neither fathers nor mothers to wait on you. If you don't care for one another, who then will care for you? Whoever, monks, would wait on me, let him wait on the sick."

Vm 8.26

B3 Brethren, there are [these] things not to be forgotten, to be held high and esteemed. They lead to concord, to peace, and to general harmony. What are they?

One serves others with deeds that are full of love,
both openly and when not seen.

One serves others with words that are full of love,
both openly and when not seen.

One serves others with a mind that is full of love,
both openly and when not seen.

M 48.6

C2 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

Lk 22:24-27

C3 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

Mk 9:35

4. The Peacemaker

B1 [The disciple] brings together those
separated, consolidates those united.
Harmony makes him happy, concord pleases
him; he speaks words conducing to peace.
M 27.13

B2 Concord is a blessed thing in the order.
Peace without bondage never abandons
The friend of the friendly,
Who is agreeable, staunchly upright.
Making the order's concord endure,
He rejoices in heaven.
It. 1.2.9

C1 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they
shall be called sons of God."
Mt 5:9

C2 Jesus said, "when you make the two one,
you will become the sons of man, and when
you say, 'Mountain, move away,' it will
move away."¹
Th 106

¹ Cf.: In the Matthean version the central issue is faith:
"For truly I tell you, if you have faith like a grain of
mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from
here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be
impossible to you." (Mt 17:20)

5. Contrary Laws

- B1 What the world holds as true
The Noble Ones hold as false.
 They see correctly,
 With perfect insight.
- What the world holds as false
The Noble Ones hold as true.
 They see correctly,
 With perfect insight.
- Sn 755
- B2 The cessation of the existing body is
regarded as pleasant¹ by the Noble Ones; this
is the opposite of what common wisdom
holds true.
 “What fools say is pleasant, that the Noble
Ones say is unpleasant;¹ what fools say is
unpleasant, that the Noble Ones know as
pleasant. See, here is a thing difficult to
understand; here the ignorant are
confounded.”
- Sn 761-2
- B3 Sorrow disguised as joy,
The hateful as the loved—
Thus pain in the form of bliss
Overwhelms the heedless one!
- Ud 2.8

- C1 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money,
heard all this, and they scoffed at him.
 So he said to them, “You are those who
justify yourselves before men, but God
knows your hearts; for what is exalted among
men is an abomination in the sight of God.”
- Lk 16:14-15
- C2 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is
the kingdom of heaven.
 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will
be comforted.
 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness, for they will be filled.
 Blessed are the merciful, for they will
receive mercy.
 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will
see God.
 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will
be called children of God.
 Blessed are you when people revile you
and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil
against you falsely on my account. Rejoice
and be glad, for your reward is great in
heaven, for in the same way they persecuted
the prophets who were before you.
- Mt 5:3-12
- C3 A slave cannot serve two masters; for a
slave will either hate the one and love the
other, or be devoted to the one and despise
the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
- Lk 16:13

¹ *sukhato* (beneficial, pleasant), *dukkhato* (unprofitable, painful).

6. The Two Paths

B1 One is the path to earthly wealth,
 Another the path to *nirvana*.
 Think on this, follower of the Buddha!
 Strive not for reputation
 But seek ever after freedom.
 Dh 75

B2 The teacher may admonish,
 The teacher may instruct,
 The teacher may forbid what is improper,
 By the good will he be loved,
 By the bad will he be hated.
 Dh 77

B3 Prosperity in life is plain
 Decline in life is plain
 He who loves Truth¹ prospers
 He who hates Truth declines.
 Sn 92

B4 These two gifts there are,
 The carnal and the spiritual.
 Of these two gifts, brethren,
 The spiritual is pre-eminent.

 These two sharings there are,
 The carnal and the spiritual.
 Of these two sharings, brethren,
 The spiritual is pre-eminent.

 These two kindnesses there are,
 The carnal and the spiritual.
 Of these two kindnesses, brethren,
 The spiritual is pre-eminent.

 These two sacrifices there are,
 The carnal and the spiritual.
 Of these two sacrifices, brethren,
 The spiritual is pre-eminent.

 He who makes the spiritual offering
 Is pre-eminent among beings
 Honored by all
 As one who has gone beyond.
 It. 4.1

C1 A slave cannot serve two masters; for a
 slave will either hate the one and love the
 other, or be devoted to the one and despise
 the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
 Lk 16:13

C2 Whoever is not with me is against me, and
 whoever does not gather with me, scatters.
 Mt 12:30

C3 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that
 kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is
 divided against itself, that house will not be
 able to stand.
 Mk 3:24-25

C4 No one can enter the kingdom of God
 without being born of water and spirit. What
 is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born
 of the spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished
 that I said to you, "You must be born from
 above."
 Jn 3:5-7

¹ *dhamma*

7. The Difficult Way

B1 “The way is hard to go, Exalted One, and rough the path!”
“And yet along the path you call rough, O Kamada, the Noble Ones hold their course. In that ‘rough path’ ignoble persons fall headlong, yet to the Noble Ones the way is even.
“Noble Ones walk over the uneven with even stride.”

S 1.2.6

B2 Few reach the further shore¹
Most run up and down this shore.
Yet those who follow the Norm, well-preached,
Pass beyond death’s domain,
A current hard to cross.

Dh 85-86

B3 What I have won through many toils,
Enough! Why should I make it known?²
This is no Truth that can be seen
By folk consumed with anger and desire.
The Truth goes against the stream,
Deep it is, subtle, hard to see—
Invisible it will stay to passion’s slaves,
Blinded by the murk of ignorance.

S 1.6.1

B4 Things not good, harmful to oneself,
These are so easy to do!
But what is good and helpful to oneself,
This is very difficult to do.³

Dh 163

B5 Blind is this world,
How few see the light!
Like a bird fleeing the net
Rare is he who flies to heaven.

Dh 174

C1 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Mt 7:13-14

C2 “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”⁴

Mk 10:24b-25

C3 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Mt 22:14

¹ i.e., *nirvana*.

² In this famous passage the Buddha has not yet embarked on his career. He considers the difficult, counterintuitive nature of the Doctrine and its unsuitability for worldly people.

³ This verse appears to be paraphrased in King Ashoka’s rock edict No. 5 (mid-III BCE).

⁴ This famous saying is encountered also in Chp. 11, “On Renunciation.” The Aramaic (Syriac Peshitta) version of this passage reads “rope” instead of “camel,” both being represented by the same Aramaic word, *gamlā* (Lamsa, xvi).

7. The Difficult Way

C4 “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’”

Lk 14:26-30

C5 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” But Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” Jesus said to him, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Lk 9:57-62

8. Not of the World

B1 “Truly, there is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed.¹ If there were not this Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed, escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed, would not be possible.”
Ud 8.3

B2 Sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and tangibles,²
Yea, all impressions and ideas³ thereof—
These are the direful bait that draws the world,
Therein the world lies infatuated.
If they go beyond all this, leave it behind,
The Buddha’s followers with mind aware
Pass beyond the range of the devil’s might.
Like the glorious sun do they shine
Filling the world with light.
S 1.4.17

B3 This body vile, this brittle, crumbling
thing, touches me only with distress and
shame.
S 1.5.4

B4 These two gifts there are,
The carnal and the spiritual.
Of these two gifts, brethren,
The spiritual is pre-eminent.
It. 3.5.9

B5 “Now, suppose one were to say, ‘I will walk until I reach the end of the world.’ Brethren, were one to live even a hundred years and walk for a hundred years, one would die before reaching the end of the world. Why? Because the end of the world is not reached, not seen, not known, through such journeying.
“Yet I say to you, brethren, that unless you reach the end of the world, you will in no wise put an end to suffering.”
A 9.4.7

C1 “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”
Jn 18:36

C2 “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.”
Lk 17:20b-21

C3 “It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”
Jn 6:63

C4 “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what does it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?”
Mk 8:34b-37

C5 Jesus said, “Give to Caesar the things that are the Caesar’s, and give to God the things that are God’s.”
Mk 12:17

C6 “A slave cannot serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”
Lk 16:13

C7 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at him.
So he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”
Lk 16:14-15

C8 “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.”
Jn 4:24

¹ A fundamental statement in Buddhist metaphysics.

² All that proceeds from the five external senses.

³ The mind is the sixth sense in Buddhist psychology.

9. "The Kingdom of God is Within You"

B1 "Truly friend, I say to you, that within this very body, mortal as it is and only a fathom high, yet conscious and endowed with mind, is the world, the waxing thereof, the waning thereof, and the way that leads to the passing away thereof."¹

S 1.2.26

B2 Let the disciple be inwardly pacified, let that person not seek peace from any other; for one who is inwardly pacified there is nothing accepted or rejected.²

Sn 919

¹ Both the Buddha and the Christ (B1, C1) taught that Truth, liberation, understanding, are found not after death but in this very life. *Nirvana* (literally: "extinguishing") and the *Kingdom of God* are attainable and potentially present in the 'now' to any whole-hearted seeker. This is the point of existence (B2, C2; Chp. 49). However, this doctrine (realized eschatology) did not long survive the teaching of both Masters. It is contrary to the belief in a future paradise, a belief beloved of people everywhere and found in most religions. After all, a future paradise is an intuitive, deep-seated psychological reaction to the frustrations of life, for which it offers a ready answer. But the Buddha and the Christ did not endorse such wishful and entirely self-centered thinking (the basis of the notion of paradise is eternal pleasure). They taught that paradise is in fact not even what we really need or want, which is inner (not outer) fulfillment and peace. That peace is the result of enlightenment, of an arduous road of seeking and renunciation. According to the doctrines of Karma and the Golden Rule (Chp. 27), good and evil receive their just and verifiable rewards in this very life. The greatest reward of good works is liberating enlightenment which frees one from all suffering 'here below.' This gnostic way is disliked by ordinary people because it demands truthful effort and renunciation, but it is also despised by religious institutions because it has no use for them.

Theravada Buddhism has preserved the essential model of the self-liberating person, but has tempered this model with the popular Indian doctrine of rebirth. By teaching the concept of infinite rebirths (as many as is necessary to reach enlightenment), received Buddhism has effectively removed the need to do important spiritual work now, without delay. In the scriptures (S 1.3.1) we read that one must extinguish delusion with the same energy as if one's hair were on fire, or as if a sword hung over one's head.

² Having attained egolessness, there is no longer 'any one' to do the accepting or rejecting; and having through insight perceived the emptiness (*suññata*) of things, there is also nothing to receive or reject.

C1 "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you."³

Lk 17:20b-21

C2 "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless.⁴ The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."

Jn 6:63

C3 "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth."⁵

Jn 4:24

³ Alternatively, "the kingdom of God is among you." In either case Jesus teaches that the kingdom is present, not future. Especially in the Gospel of Thomas we see that the Kingdom results from seeking and attaining understanding. This gnostic and very Buddhist view of life is also found in the canonical gospels (C1, see next note). Yet Buddhism and Christianity developed doctrines of a redeemer and of a vicarious savior. Both traditions elevated the founders, sometimes to god-like status. This elevation relieves the individual of the necessary work of himself/herself becoming a Buddha, a Christ.

One basic point is that liberation is not temporal. It is not a linear progression through history—the present age giving way to some future Paradise. As discussed in note 1, it is spiritual. Liberation is an elevation in the here and now, an attainment which depends on the breaking of physical attachment and desire (B1, C2, C3; Chps. 10, 11).

⁴ The impotence of the physical is a frequent theme in both Christianity (esp. GJn and GTh) and Buddhism. It does not mean, however, that one should invent a future life following this present existence, but that one, in this present existence, should transcend the physical.

⁵ Cf. also: Mk 7:15-23; Mt 23:26; Jn 3:5-8; 8:23; 18:36.

10. Life Unseen

B1 The cooling of a twinkling spark
Struck from an anvil and gradually fading
Cannot be seen.
So also, those who have nobly gained release,
Crossed the river of lusts that bind,
Reached the bliss unshaken,
Their goal cannot be pointed to.¹
Ud 13.10

B2 Who can trace the path of those
Who know the right sustenance of life,
Who have rejected over-abundance
And soar in the sky of liberation,
The infinite Void without beginning?
Their path is hard to follow,
Like that of birds in the air.

Who can trace the invisible path of him
Who soars in the sky of liberation,
The infinite Void without beginning,
Whose passions are peace,
And over whom pleasures have no power?
His path is hard to follow,
Like that of a bird in the air.
Dh 92-93

B3 He whose path is not known by men,
nor by spirits or gods,
who is pure of all imperfections,
who is a saint, an Accomplished One²—
him I call a *Brahmin*.
Dh 420

¹ The reason the path to enlightenment cannot be seen is that it is an inner spiritual journey. The most important journey in life may not be visible to friends, acquaintances, or even family. Spiritual progress (and backsliding) is the result of intention, something that is often subconscious (invisible even to ourselves), and which in any case remains private unless we choose to reveal it. Though private, however, the life of the spirit has immense karmic ramifications which are ineluctably manifested through the choices we make, through our relationships, and thus through many of the big and little events in our outward life (cf. Chps. 27, 32).

² *Arahat*.

C1 “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.”¹
Lk 17:20b-21

C2 “Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you don’t know from where it comes or where it goes. So it is with anyone born of the spirit.”
Jn 3:7-8

C3 “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.”
Jn 4:24

C4 “It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is profitless.”³ The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”
Jn 6:63

C5 “I am not of this world.”
Jn 8:23b

³ This encompassing statement summarily reverses ordinary priorities. The “flesh” represents indulgences in all their forms, and includes the pleasures of ‘the world’ (cf. C5)—sensuality, the quests for power, fame, and riches.

It should be noted that “the flesh” is not condemned. It is “profitless” (*ōphelei ouden*), not bad. This is an essential distinction maintained in both Buddhism and Christianity. It is not the dualism of Manichaeism and of many Gnostic sects, where the body and the physical world are evil, and only the spiritual element is good. The Buddha and the Christ see the physical as neutral, with one special caveat—it is an ever-present temptation (through pleasure, attachment), one which draws us away from the true course. By heeding sense and ego desires, we are duped, tricked, blinded, deprived of true, enduring happiness. In other words, the flesh is an alluring decoy. It does no good to say that a decoy is bad. What is bad is going after a decoy. The remedy is to understand—to see clearly, and thus know what is a decoy and what isn’t.

11. On Renunciation

B1 I call one indeed a *Brahmin*¹
 who has no moral stain²
 in the past, present, or future,³
 who is free from stains and grasping.⁴
 Dh 421

B2 Except by high wisdom's modes,
 By ways austere,
 Except by restraint of powers and faculties,
 Except by renouncing and forsaking all,
 No safety can I see for living things.
 S 1.2.17

B3 "Visakha, those who have a hundred
 beloved things have a hundred sorrows,
 Those who have ninety beloved things
 have ninety sorrows,
 Those who have ten beloved things
 have ten sorrows...
 And those who have no beloved thing
 have no sorrow at all.
 They are sorrowless and compassionate.
 Truly, they are serene.
 Ud 8.8

¹ The concept of the true Brahmin was an early Buddhist epithet for the enlightened person, whose model was the Buddha. This new model is deliberately set against the older Vedic model of the sacrificing, mantra-chanting priest (cf. Chp.1, B10; Chp. 45). The true Brahmin is the predominant model of discipleship in the early collection known as the *Sutta Nipāta*.

² *kiñcanam*: including lust, anger, and delusion (the three karmically unwholesome roots).

³ The 'past' is included for poetic effect. All have had bad karma in the past, and the true Brahmin is the one who has 'worked out' his bad karma and does not add to it in the present or in the future. Thus he attains and remains in perfect karmic purity.

⁴ *ādānam*, also translated 'taking, holding on to, attachment.' It is related to metaphysical thirst (*taṇha*), the second link in the chain of causation which produces all existence and suffering. This central concept of not grasping refers to not being deluded by the 'decoy' of pleasures noted in the previous chapter.

C1 "So therefore, none of you can become my
 disciple if you do not give up all your
 possessions." Lk 14:33

C2 "And everyone who has left houses⁵ or
 brothers or sisters or father or mother or
 children or lands, for my name's sake, will
 receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life.
 "And many that are first will be last, and
 the last first." Mt 19:29-30

C3 He called the crowd with his disciples, and
 said to them, "If any want to become my
 followers, let them deny themselves and take
 up their cross and follow me. For those who
 want to save their life will lose it, and those
 who lose their life for my sake, and for the
 sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will
 it profit them to gain the whole world and
 forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give
 in return for their life?"
 Mk 8:34-37

C4 "Sell your possessions and give alms.
 Make purses for yourselves that do not wear
 out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no
 thief comes near and no moth destroys. For
 where your treasure is, there your heart will
 be also."
 Lk 12:33-34

⁵ Leaving 'houses' means abandoning the household life, known in Buddhism as *pabbajja*, a signal step along the path to enlightenment. The many Christian citations in this chapter show that the Christ also taught the need for cutting off attachments of every kind, particularly those most near and dear to us. The story of Prince Siddhartha Gautama leaving the palace at night is a model, but in Christ's ministry we also see a man with no attachments to home and hearth (cf. Chp. 15).

11. On Renunciation

B4 Even the gods long to be like the Buddhas
who are awake and watch,
who find peace in contemplation and who,
calm and steady,
find joy in renunciation.

Dh 181

B5 “I have nothing to do with exaltation,¹
Nagita, nor does it have anything to do with me.
Whoever cannot obtain the joy of renunciation,²
at will, freely, and readily,
whoever cannot obtain the joy of seclusion,
the joy of enlightenment, as I can,
let that person wallow in that dung-like joy,
that dirt-clod of joy,
that joy gotten of gains, favors, and flattery.”

A 6.4.12

B6 One who crushes the great ‘I am’ conceit—
This, even this, is supreme happiness.³

Ud 2.1

B7 Neither iron, nor wood, nor cord of rope
—so the wise have seen—
bind so firmly as love of self,
of precious stones and rings,
of thoughts of children and of wives.

Those who renounce the world
Their hearts averted from all sensuous joys
Cut this mighty bond in twain
Downward dragging, subtle, hard to loose.

S 1.3.10

¹ *yaso*: “glory, fame, repute, success, high position” (PED). We should keep this in mind when paying reverence, for neither the Buddha nor the Christ ask to be worshipped. They require acts in the form of self-denial, renunciation, and seeking.

² *nekkhammasukham*. This striking phrase, “the joy of renunciation” shows the contrary way the Buddha looks at the world when compared to the ordinary view. In his teaching, the world merely offers the possibility for attachments, among which is attachment to reputation.

³ Here we have the greatest renunciation of all: that of the ego, the self. It is thoroughly liberating, joyful.

C5 “Whoever loves father or mother more
than me is not worthy of me; and whoever
loves son or daughter more than me is not
worthy of me; and whoever does not take up
the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
Those who find their life will lose it, and
those who lose their life for my sake will find
it.”

Mt 10:37-39

C6 “Children, how hard it is to enter the
kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go
through the eye of a needle than for someone
who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”⁴

Mk 10:24b-25

⁴ This saying has resonated through the ages as a warning against the dangers of wealth. We encountered it in Chps. 2 and 7. To enter heaven one is required to renounce wealth (C1, C4, C7). It goes against the tenor of this and other passages to suppose that one can reach the Kingdom (“find Truth”) while keeping, defending, using, and enjoying riches. In the final analysis such insistence is the hypocrite’s rationalization. Certain Christian denominations suppose that we may keep riches so long as we renounce *attachment* to them. Yet nowhere do the Buddha or the Christ teach that one can renounce something while still keeping it. On the other hand, such an exercise is pointless and leads to aggravation (B7, C1, C8, etc.). Some Christians through history have considered wealth the gift of God, the product of grace, the reward of election (predestination), and to be used only for the greater glory of God. But these are circumlocutions around the Masters’ clear message. They are doctrinal perversities masking the desire to justify, retain, and accumulate wealth. In this particular saying (C6), we see that no matter what one’s attitude towards wealth may be, *one who is rich does not enter the kingdom of God*— unless one supposes that a camel passes through the eye of a needle. What could be more plain?

Why, we may ask, is it impossible for a rich person to enter the Kingdom? For several reasons, each attested in these pages: (1) where one’s treasure is, there is the heart also (Chp. 17, C4); (2) one cannot serve both truth and wealth (Chp. 6, C1); and (3) one must focus one’s energies on the real treasure which “no moth destroys” (C4).

11. On Renunciation

B8 Put away anger and abandon the self,
Transcend all bonds to mind and body!¹
Then totally unhampered,
Sorrow will torment you no more.

Things, though pleasant, are not pleasure's goal
Pleasure itself is the allure.
Things remain in the world
The wise remove desire for them.²
S 1.1.3

¹ *namarupa*: 'the named and the formed.' These are the two categories for all that exists. We are to transcend attachments ('bonds') that tie us not only to physical things (e.g., addictions, sensuality) but also to mental perceptions ('names' or ideas, ego-gratifications, compulsions, etc.) that arise with reference to physical things and to other beings.

² People often think that by loving or despising they are somehow affecting the object (or person) receiving their attention. By receiving love or hate, people also think they are helped or injured thereby. Yet this is not automatic—it is in our minds. A person is affected by love or hate if he allows himself to be so affected. For example, one who seeks love will surely be affected negatively by hatred, and positively by receiving love. But one who is not seeking love is unaffected either by positive or negative emotions.

There is a beautiful story (Chp. 41, B13) where the Buddha is verbally abused at great length. Though he hears the abuse, he remains detached and rejects it as one would decline an unwanted gift. The abuse returns to the person giving it, where it will eventually have its negative karmic results. Karma (*cetana*. Cf. chp. 27) is the result of intention, and redounds upon the person doing the intending, remaining with that person until it is fully worked out.

If one uproots a flower out of anger, he may think, "I have destroyed this with my own power." He reaps bad karma due to his anger (the intention to destroy), and also due to his ignorance (the sense of a self with power). Both lead to suffering. The flower will indeed now die sooner than it would have had he not plucked it up, and in this sense he 'destroys' it. But the negative aspect is his intent to do harm, not the change that the flower undergoes—for, in fact, he does not have enough understanding to know all that he is doing. In his violence he may scatter pollen over the ground so that the flower now germinates sooner, and creates ten plants where before there was only one. The teaching is this: good and bad are in our minds, not 'out there.' For all that, good and bad are very real. Good intent is good, and the intent to harm is bad.

C7 "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."³

Mt 19:21

C8 "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where the worm dies not and the fire is never quenched."

Mk 9:43-48

C9 Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

Th 54

³ The emphasis in this saying is on becoming perfect. Jesus was aware how difficult it is to give up possessions. He acknowledges the rich young man's reverence for the traditional commandments of Judaism (Mt 19:16ff.), but, as was his wont, he intensifies those commandments in a way that up till then had no precedent in the Western World. Nowhere in Judaism does it say one must renounce possessions, nowhere does it say one must love one's enemies, nowhere (except perhaps among the Essenes) does it say one must be chaste, etc. Yet these radical conceptions are present in the teaching of Jesus, as they are in Buddhism where they had already been firmly entrenched for five hundred years.

In the teaching of Jesus, becoming "perfect" is the equivalent to becoming an *arahat*, an Enlightened One, in Buddhism. This perfection requires giving up all (C1) whether one is a rich man, as in this passage, or poor. The widow (Cf. Chp.2) may give only two mites, yet this is her all. The fisherman throws away all the other fish, yet keeps "the large one" representing the Kingdom of Heaven (Chp. 49). However much or little one has, that must one renounce.

12. The True Conquest

B1 If a man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, this last is the greatest of conquerors.

One's own self conquered is better than all other people conquered; not even a god can change into defeat the victory of one who has vanquished himself.

Dh 103-105

B2 A poor thing is human sovereignty when compared to heavenly bliss.

A 3.7.70.18

C1 "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what does it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?"

Mk 8:34b-37

13. Satisfied With Little

B1 “As a bird, wherever it flies, carries only its feathers with it, so also the disciple is satisfied with robes to cover the body, and with alms-food to keep the stomach going. Wherever he may roam, he does so with only these. Thus it is, O king, that the disciple becomes content.”

D 2.66

B2 “Wherefore, Cunda, be content with raiment sufficient for the warding off of cold and heat, wind and sun, of the bite of mosquito, insect, and snake. Be content with alms sufficient to sustain the body, to keep it going, to prevent injury, to aid in living the holy life, and in realizing the thought: ‘Thus will I conquer sensation which has arisen, and cause no new sensation to arise. In this measure I will remain at ease and incur no blame.’

“Be content with lodging sufficient for the warding off of cold and heat, wind and sun, of the bite of mosquito, insect, and snake—this for the purpose of avoiding the dangers of climate and of enjoying seclusion. Be content with drugs and other necessities for sickness which are sufficient to ward off sensations of illness that have arisen and to preserve your health.”

D 29.22

B3 “A disciple who is satisfied with what alms are given him, and who frets not about what is given to others, who is protected by continual passionlessness and reflection—him the gods do delight in.”

Uv 32.1

B4 Robes, alms, requisites, a dwelling-place—do not thirst after these, that you may not go back to the world again.

Sn 339

C1 “And Jesus said to [his disciples], “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics.”

Lk 9:3

C2 “Take no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff; for the laborer deserves his food.”

Mt 10:9-10

13. Satisfied With Little

B5 “What will I eat, or where will I eat?”
“I indeed lay uncomfortably last night,
where will I lie tonight?”
Let the disciple who wanders about houseless
subdue these lamentable doubts.
Sn 970

B6 Brethren, these four things are trifling,
easily gotten and blameless too. What four?
For clothes, rag-robcs are a trifling thing,
blameless and easily gotten.
For lodging, the foot of a tree is a trifling
thing, blameless and easily gotten.
For food, alms of scraps is a trifling
thing, blameless and easily gotten.
For medicine, ammonia is a trifling thing,
blameless and easily gotten.
Truly, brethren, when a disciple is
content with trifles that are easily gotten, this
is a great benefit in his recluseship.
It. 4.2

B7 Who can trace the path of those
who know the right food of life
and rejecting over-abundance,
soar in the sky of liberation,
the infinite Void without beginning?
Their course is as hard to follow
as that of the birds in the air.

Who can trace the invisible path
of the man who soars in the sky of liberation,
the infinite Void without beginning,
whose passions are peace,
and over whom pleasures have no power?
His path is as difficult to trace
as that of the birds in the air.
Dh 92-93

C3 “Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious
about your life, what you will eat or what you
will drink, nor about your body, what you
will put on. Is not life more than food, and
the body more than clothing? Look at the
birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap,
nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly
Father feeds them. Are you not worth more
than they? And which of you by being
anxious can add one inch to his height?

“And why are you anxious about
clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how
they grow. They neither toil nor spin, yet I
tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was
not arrayed like one of these. But if God so
clothes the grass of the field, which today is
alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,
will he not much more clothe you, O men of
little faith?

“Therefore do not be anxious, saying,
‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’
or ‘What will we wear?’ For the gentiles seek
all these things, and your heavenly Father
knows that you need them. But seek first his
kingdom and his righteousness, and all these
things will be yours as well.”

Mt 6:25-33

14. On Poverty

B1 Happy indeed are they who own nothing!
 Those who have won wisdom
 Call nothing their own
 Look—how tortured is the one with possessions!
 Ud 2.6

B2 “Visakha, those who have a hundred
 beloved things have a hundred sorrows,
 Those who have ninety beloved things
 have ninety sorrows,
 Those who have ten beloved things
 have ten sorrows,
 Those who have only one beloved thing
 have only one sorrow,
 And those who have no beloved thing
 have no sorrow at all.
 They are sorrowless and compassionate.
 Truly, they are serene.
 Ud 8.8

B3 I do not call one a *Brahmin* because he
 was born in a certain family or of a certain
 mother, for he may be conceited and may be
 wealthy.
 But he who is free from possessions and
 from desires—that person I call a *Brahmin*.
 Dh 396

B4 Ah, we live happily,
 we who have nothing!
 Let us live from joy,
 even as gods of light!
 Dh 200

C1 “Blessed are you poor,
 for yours is the kingdom of God.”
 Th 54

C2 A certain aristocrat asked him, “Good
 teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal
 life?”

Jesus said, “Why do you call me
 good? None is good except one: God.
 You know the commandments: you
 shouldn’t commit adultery, you shouldn’t
 kill, you shouldn’t steal, you shouldn’t
 bear false witness, honor your father and
 your mother.”

He said, “I’ve observed all of these
 since I was a child.”

Hearing this, Jesus said, “You lack
 just one thing: sell everything you have
 and distribute to the poor, and you’ll
 have treasure in heaven. And come,
 follow me.”

Hearing these things he became very
 sad, for he was extremely rich.

Seeing him thus saddened Jesus said,
 “How difficult it is for those who have
 riches to enter the kingdom of God! For
 it’s easier for a camel to go through the
 eye of a needle, than for a rich person to
 enter the kingdom of God.”

Lk 18:18-25

15. On Homelessness

B1 The mindful exert themselves
They do not delight in a home
Like swans who have left their lake
and rise into the sky
They leave their home for a higher place.
Dh 91

B2 Him indeed I call a Brahmin, who in this
world, having abandoned all longings, travels
about without a home, and in whom all
covetousness is extinct. Dh 415

B3 Having left son and wife, father, mother
and relatives, wealth, corn, and all the varied
goals of desire, let one wander as solitary as
the horn of a rhinoceros. Sn 60

B4 Consider a householder hearing the
doctrine, or his son, or someone else. Hearing
it, he develops trust in the Buddha. Filled
with faith he thinks and considers in himself,
‘The household life is confining, a prison; it
is sullied, like a dusty corner. But the
wanderer’s life is free as the open air. Home
life does not permit the religious life in all its
details, a life perfectly cleansed, perfectly
pure. What if I shave head and beard, don old
clothing, and leave home for the homeless
life?’ Thinking thus, he gives up his
possession, be they many or few, abandons
his circle of relatives, be it large or small, and
goes forth with shaven head and beard, in old
clothes, from home into the homeless life.
M 27.12

B5 Brethren, there are these two pleasures.
What two? That of home, and that of
homelessness. These are the two pleasures.
Of these two, that of homelessness is pre-
eminent. A 2.7.1

B6 For neither home nor husband, though they
be so dear to us, can save us from all ill, as
can the hearing of the blessed Norm from
pain and sorrow set a person free.
S 1.10.7

C1 Then Peter said, “Look, we have left our
homes and followed you.” And [Jesus] said
to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one
who has left house or wife or brothers or
parents or children, for the sake of the
kingdom of God, who will not get back very
much more in this age, and in the age to
come eternal life.”

Lk 18:28-30

C2 ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air
have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere
to lay his head.’

Lk 9:58

C3 “Whoever loves father or mother more than
me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves
son or daughter more than me is not worthy
of me; and whoever does not take up the
cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
Those who find their life will lose, and those
who lose their life for my sake will find it.”
Mt 10:37-39

C4 He said to his disciples, “Therefore I say
to you, do not worry about your life, what
you will eat, or about your body, what you
will wear. For life is more than food, and the
body more than clothing.”

Lk 12:22-23

15. On Homelessness

B7 A just life, a religious life—this they call the best gem, when one has voluntarily left home and entered homelessness. Sn 274

B8 “Brethren, this is the meanest of callings, this of a beggar. In the world it is a term of abuse, to say ‘You scrap-gatherer! You who wander about with bowl in hand!’ Yet this calling is entered on by those who are bent on the good because of goodness. They are not led to it through fear of kings or robbers, not through debt or through having lost a means of livelihood, but with the thought, ‘Here am I, fallen on birth, old age, and death.... Yet, perhaps some means of ending all this suffering can be found.’” It 3.5.2

B9 While at Savatthi, the Exalted one, having dressed early and taken robe and bowl, came one day to the dwelling of Udaya the Brahmin. Then Udaya filled the Exalted One’s bowl with rice.

Now the Exalted one repeated his visit the second day, and again the third, and each time Udaya the Brahmin filled his bowl with rice. After he had done so the third time, Udaya said, “A persistent man is the ascetic Gautama, that he comes again and again!”

And the Exalted one responded:
 “Mark how many seeds are sown
 but how few times rain comes down
 Mark how many times the farmer ploughs
 but how few times corn is reaped
 Mark how many beggars go their rounds
 but how few donors generously give
 Mark how many gifts are given
 for a donor to find heaven. S 1.7.2.2

B10 Those who renounce the world
 Their hearts averted from all sensuous joys
 Cut this mighty bond in twain
 Downward dragging, subtle, hard to loose.
 S 1.3.10

C5 “Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not go about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” Lk 10:4-9

C6 At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.” Mt 12:1

C7 [Jesus] left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there. In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Mt 21:17-18

16. The Emptiness of Wealth

B1 Better than power over all the earth, better
than going to heaven, and better than
dominion over the worlds is the joy of the
man who enters the river of life that leads to
Nirvana.
Dh 178

B2 Tho' a king even conquer all the world
And rule therein from sea to sea,
The water's edge will taunt him still,
His grasping gaze seeking further shores.

Long life is not bought with gold
Nor is old age banished with goods,
"Short is life" say the wise,
"Changing, unsure, impermanent."

Wisdom is better than goods or gold
For by it is our goal secured
The confused wretchedly do evil
And bind themselves to becoming this or that.
M 82.41-42

B3 Let the wise do righteousness
A treasure which no thief can steal
Which none can share
Which becomes not old.
DhC 222

B4 "These children are mine, these riches are
mine;" with such thoughts the fool is
distracted. What are children and riches to
one who owns not even himself in the other
world?

"It is the law of humanity that, though
one acquire hundreds and thousands of
worldly goods, one still falls into the power
of the lord of death. The end of all that has
been hoarded is to be spent; the end of what
has been lifted up is to be cast down; the end
of meeting is separation; the end of life is
death."
Uv 1.20-22

B5 A poor thing is human sovereignty when
compared to heavenly bliss.
A 3.7.70.18

C1 "For what does it profit a man, to gain the
whole world and forfeit his life? For what
can a man give in return for his life?"
Mk 8:36-37

C2 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on
earth, where moth and rust consume and
where thieves break in and steal, but lay up
for yourselves treasures in heaven, where
neither moth nor rust consumes and where
thieves do not break in and steal."
Mt 6:19-20

C3 And he told them a parable, saying, "The
land of a rich man brought forth plentifully;
and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do,
for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And
he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my
barns and build larger ones; and there I will
store all my grain and my goods. And I will
say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods
laid up for many years; take your ease, eat,
drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him,
'Fool! This night your soul is required of you;
and the things you have prepared, whose will
they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for
himself, and is not rich towards God."
Lk 12:16-21

16. The Emptiness of Wealth

B6 Now Ugga, the rajah's chief minister, visited the Exalted One, saluted him, and sat down at one side. And so seated, he said to the Exalted One:

"Lord, it is amazing, astonishing, how rich, wealthy, and opulent Migara Rohaneyya is!"

"Well, what does his treasure amount to, Ugga?"

"Lord, of gold there is a hundred hundred thousand; and of silver, who can tell?"

"But is that really treasure, Ugga? I don't say that it isn't, but the treasure of which you speak is subject to fire, water, rajahs, robbers, enemies, and heirs.

"Ugga, there are seven treasures that are not subject to these things. What seven? The treasures of faith, virtue, conscientiousness, fear of blame, listening, bounty, and wisdom.

"Truly, Ugga, these seven treasures are not subject to fire, water, rajahs, robbers, enemies, and heirs." A 7.1.7

B7 "When, disciples, riches accrue to the son of a householder, to one who has exerted himself, toiled, and struggled, then anguish and anxiety gnaw at him regarding the preservation of those riches: 'If only my goods be not taken by kings, plundered by robbers, consumed by fire, ravaged by flood, or pried away by relatives!' Yet though he watches and guard over his possessions, they are taken by kings, plundered by robbers, consumed by fire, ravaged by flood, or pried away by relatives. At this he is aggrieved and of heavy heart. He laments, groans, beats his breast, and sinks into despair. 'My possessions, I no longer have them!' This, disciples, is the misery of craving. Here the link is revealed: suffering arises from craving, is decreed by craving, is maintained through craving, is wholly determined by craving." M 13.10

C4 "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Lk 18:22

C5 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and receive eternal life."

Mt 19:29

17. On Riches

B1 Wealth destroys the fool who seeks not the beyond. Because of greed for wealth the fool destroys himself, as if he were his own enemy.
Dh 355

B2 Wise people do not call that a strong bond which is made of iron, wood, or rope; passionately strong is the care for precious stones and rings, for sons and a wife.
Dh 345

B3 One is the way that leads to gain
Another the way to nirvana.
Supremely understanding this,
Buddha's disciple should not rejoice in honor,
But cultivate seclusion.
Dh 75

B4 That person who is given to self-esteem and sets great store on gains and honors, who loves the companionship of friends—far from the ending of fetters is such a one. But that person who gives up children and cattle, marriage rites and heaping up of riches—such a disciple is one who can reach supreme wisdom.
It. 3.4.1

B5 It is hard, sir, for you—a layperson, holding worldly possessions, dwelling amidst the encumbrances of children, accustomed to Benares sandalwood, arrayed in garlands and perfumed unguents, using gold and silver—to know whether those are Enlightened Beings,¹ or are on the path to enlightenment.
S 1.3.11

C1 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.”
Lk 6:24

C2 “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”
Lk 18:24-25

C3 “Sell all you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”
Lk 18:22b

C4 “Sell all your possessions and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
Lk 12:33-34

C5 “And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”
Mt 19:29-30

¹ *Arahats.*

17. On Riches

B6 He who extensively covets pleasures, fields, goods, or gold, cows, women, relations—sins will overpower him, dangers will crush him, and pain will follow him, just as water pours into a broken ship.

Sn 769-770

B7 Death takes what people deem their possessions. Disciple mine, lay claim to nothing.”

Sn 806

B8 “These children are mine, these riches are mine;” with such thoughts the fool is distracted. What are children and riches to one who owns not even himself in the other world?

“It is the law of humanity that, though one acquire hundreds and thousands of worldly goods, one still falls into the power of the lord of death. The end of all that has been hoarded is to be spent; the end of what has been lifted up is to be cast down; the end of meeting is separation; the end of life is death.”

Uv 1.20-22

B9 “Here will I dwell in the season of rains, and here in winter and summer.” Thus thinks the fool, but he does not think of death.

For death carries away the man whose mind is self-satisfied with his children and his flocks, even as a torrent carries away a sleeping village.

Neither father, sons, nor relatives can stop the King of Death. When he comes with all his power, a man’s relatives cannot save him.

One who is virtuous and wise understands the meaning of this, and swiftly strives with all his might to clear a path to nirvana.

Dh 286-289

C6 “Beware! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”

Lk 12:15

C7 “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and wealth.”

Mt 6:24

C8 And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.:’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.”

Lk 12:16-21

17. On Riches

B10 *[In this story, Rathapalo has renounced a great inheritance and has become a disciple of the Buddha. He visits his rich father.]*

...Then his father uncovered a pile of gold and jewels and said to the worthy Rathapalo: “This is the part of your inheritance from your mother, this from your father, and this from your grandfather. One can, Rathapalo, give up the training, return to the secular life, enjoy riches and do meritorious deeds.”

“Now,” answered Rathapalo, “if you were to follow my advice, you would load that pile of gold and jewels on wagons and dump it in the middle of the river Ganges. And why? Because, householder,¹ from that source will arise grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation, and despair.” M 82.22

B11 Infatuated with their worldly wealth
Greedy and languishing in sense-desire
Discerning not that they have gone too far,
No more than the deer discerns the trap
prepared—an evil aftermath must come to
those persons, and bitter, truly, the ripened
fruit. S 1.3.6

B12 “Consider, brethren, the disciple who, finding delight in worldly activity, becomes engrossed in it; and he also becomes engrossed in talk, sleep, company, companionship, and vain fancies... Thus, brethren, the more one so fashions one’s life, the more it is fashioned to a luckless death, a luckless fate; and of his disciple it is said: that person is greatly delighted with the bundle of life; that person has not gotten rid of the bundle of life for the utter ending of suffering.” A 6.2.4

C9 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham afar off with Lazarus by his side. He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things; and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ He said, ‘Then father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘Neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Lk 16:19-31

¹ In a symptom of having overcome attachments, throughout this story Rathapalo addresses his father with the shockingly impersonal “householder.” Later, his wives faint upon being called “sisters.” A similar impersonality is found when Christ calls his mother “woman” (Jn 2:4).

18. On Ostentation

B1 Whoever exalts himself and despises others, being mean by his pride, let one know him as an outcast.

Sn 132

B2 “But when a wicked man... enjoys the salutations of wealthy nobles, wealthy Brahmins, wealthy yeomen, he does so to his harm and ill for many a day.

A 7.7.8

B3 Not by mere fine words and appearance can a man be a man of honor, if envy, greed, and deceit are in him. But he in whom these three faults are uprooted, and who has wisdom and love, he in truth is a man of honor.

Dh 263

B4 The monk who quests for alms, supporting self, who has none else to keep—him gods envy, but not if he be set on praise and fame.

Ud 3.8

B5 Nigrodha, austerity by self-mortification involves blemish in several ways... When an ascetic undertakes a course in austerity, he, through that undertaking exalts himself and despises others... he becomes one who pleases to sit in public places... and by the winning of gifts, attention, and fame, he becomes complacent, infatuated, and grows careless... These become blemishes in that ascetic.

D 25.9-10

B6 “I have nothing to do with worship, Nagita, nor do I need homage. Whoever cannot obtain the ease of renunciation, at will, freely, and readily, whoever cannot obtain the ease of seclusion, the ease of enlightenment, as I can, let that person wallow in that dung-like ease, that dirt-clod of ease, that ease gotten of gains, favors, and flattery.”

A 6.4.12

C1 “Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

Mk 2:38-40

C2 “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

Mt 23:12

C3 “Woe to you, Pharisees and hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.”

Mt 23:25

C4 “Beware of giving alms in front of men in order to be seen, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. So, when you give alms, don’t sound a trumpet as do the hypocrites in the synagogue and in the street, in order to be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gifts may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will himself openly reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Mt 6:1-6

19. On Empty Learning

B1 Consider, brethren, one with wide learning in the scriptures,¹ who understands neither the letter nor the meaning of them. He lives not in accord with the Doctrine.² That, brethren, is how a person of wide learning profits not thereby.

A 4.1.6

B2 “Disciples, I have taught the Doctrine widely. Now if a disciple understands the meaning [and letter of] the Doctrine—even if it be but a stanza of four lines—and is set on living in accordance with the Doctrine, then that person may well be called ‘one widely learned, who knows the Doctrine by heart.’”

A 4.19.6

C1 “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach”
Mt 23:2-3

C2 “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
Mt 5:20

C3 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’”

Mk 7:5-7

¹ Buddhist compilers of several centuries after the Buddha’s death have here inserted a list of “the ninefold Buddhist scriptures: *sutta*, *geyya*, *veyyakarana*, *gatha*, *udana*, *Itivuttaka*, *jataka*, *abbhutadhamma*, and *vedalla*; that is, discourses proper, discourses mixed with verses, expository matter, verses proper, short stories illustrating the ‘solemn sayings,’ the sayings, the birth-stories, the marvels, and certain catechetical discourses” (F. L. Woodward).

² *dhamma*.

20. The Rain Falls on All

B1 The rain feeds both slack and vigorous, as a mother [without prejudice] nourishes her child. The spirit of the rain sustains the life of all creatures bound to the earth.

S 1.8.10

C1 “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.”

Mt 5:44-45

21. The Commandments

B1 Whoever in this world harms living beings, whether once- or twice-born,¹ and in whom there is no compassion for living beings, let one know him as an outcast...

Be it in village or countryside, whosoever appropriates by theft what is the property of others, and what has not been given, let one know him as an outcast...

The man who for his own sake, or for that of others, or for the sake of wealth speaks falsely when asked as a witness, let one know him as an outcast...

Whoever is seen with the wives of relatives or of friends, either by force or with their consent, let one know him as an outcast...

Whoever being rich does not support mother or father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast...

Sn 117,119,122-124

B2 I will also speak now about the way of life of the householder, and how he can become a good disciple. For the perfect law of discipleship² cannot be carried out by one who is take up with worldly affairs.

Let him not kill any living being, nor cause any to be killed; let him not approve of others killing the strong or killing those that tremble in the world.

Then let the disciple abstain from taking anything in any place that has not been given, knowing it belongs to another.

(*Cont. next column*)

¹ The Buddhist scriptures have inherited the Vedic doctrine of reincarnation, and teach that one is reborn as many times as is necessary to reach enlightenment. However, the Buddha himself rebelled against many seminal Brahmanic doctrines of his day and taught a radical doctrine of *anatta*, non-self. This doctrine, compatible with those of *nibbāna* (extinguishing) and *suññata* (emptiness), is central to the originality of Buddhism and does not recognize a self that can be reborn. Later texts (particularly the *Abhidhamma*) reconciled Buddhism with the popular doctrine of rebirth and helped the new religion spread among the people.

² *bhikkhu-dhamma*.

C1 A certain aristocrat asked him, “Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said, “Why do you call me good?³ None is good except one, God. You know the commandments: you shouldn’t commit adultery, you shouldn’t kill, you shouldn’t steal, you shouldn’t bear false witness, honor your father and your mother.”

Lk 18:18-20

C2 “If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”

Mt 19:17

C3 “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

Mt 15:19-20

(*Cont.*)

Let him not cause anyone to take, nor approve of those that take—let him avoid all theft.

Let the wise man avoid an unchaste life as a burning heap of coals; not being able to lead a life of chastity, let him not transgress with another man’s wife.

Let no one speak falsely to another in the hall of justice or in the hall of the assembly, let him not cause anyone to speak falsely, nor approve of those that speak falsely—let him avoid all untruth.

Sn 393-397

³ Jesus parries the false flattery of the aristocrat. The saying is probably authentic and underlines the humanity of Jesus, a view subordinated in later tradition. The concept of Jesus as ‘not good’ fails to resonate today, yet is correct. Jesus passed beyond good and evil, which are imperfect constructs ever in balance. *Understanding* (Truth / the Father), with which he identified, is neither good nor evil but objective, and thus liberating. It sees things as they are. The imputation of goodness to ‘God’ is an oblique deprecation of both goodness and of a willing, ‘self’-endowed God, including the Jewish YHWH. Jesus was not concerned with a transcendent figure who instills fear and requires obedience, but with the person in front of him in the here and now. The purpose of the commandments is not goodness, nor obedience, but karmic liberation.

22. On Adultery

B1 Whosoever is seen with the wives of relatives or of friends either by force or with their consent, let one know him as an outcast.
Sn 123

B2 Four things come to the thoughtless man who has intercourse with another's wife: demerit, restlessness, blame, and hell.
Indeed, the degradations of the soul, a frightened pleasure, the danger of the law, the path of hell—considering these four, let a man not pursue another man's wife.
Dh 309-310

B3 Let the wise man avoid an unchaste life as a burning heap of coals; not being able to lead a life of chastity, let him not transgress with another man's wife.¹ Sn 396

¹ The intent behind this passage is strikingly similar to Paul's view given in C3. The Buddhist compares the unchaste life to "a burning heap of coals," while Paul, also alert to its dangers, writes that "it is well" to remain single and to "exercise self-control." In a most severe dictum that is certainly authentic, Jesus says that "everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (C2). Each of these sayings, of course, go well beyond the question of merely refraining from committing adultery. What, then, is the basis for the danger that both Buddhism and Christianity see in the unchaste life? It lies in the recognition that no person can serve two masters, duty and pleasure (Lk 16:13, cf. Chp. 6). When one makes the commitment to Truth paramount, then family life, conjugal relations, and the desires of the flesh are seen as deterrents from the higher path.

In a concession to the reality of human weakness, marriage is presented in a moderate tone in the scriptures of both traditions, as in B3 and C3. Though not as desirable to spiritual progress as celibacy, marriage is certainly preferable to adultery and wonton liberality. It is the way of the masses.

The Buddhist scriptures have faithfully and extensively transmitted the Master's views on the dangers of desire and of attachment to pleasure. The Christian scriptures, on the contrary, have not. Encratism (see next note) was early suppressed in the West, and only occasional sayings in the orthodox scriptures directly attest to it. Besides C2, we note Mt 19:11-12; Lk 20:34-35, 23:29; and Rev 14:3-5. It is in unorthodox scriptures such as the Gospels of Thomas and Phillip that this point of view receives its most pronounced treatment.

C1 "Do not commit adultery."
Lk 18:20 [Ex 20:14]

C2 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."² Mt 5:27-28

C3 ["To the unmarried and the widowed I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion."³ 1Cor 7:8-9

² Encratism ('continence,' <Gk.), now an obscure word in English, was a hallmark of the early Christian path, acknowledged by many heretical movements as well as by the Great Church. Similar to the Indic *brahmachariya*, encratism is not broadly 'asceticism,' nor narrowly 'chastity.' It is ultimately based in self-control, which is an aspect of liberation. In this saying Jesus intensifies the Old Testament commandment against adultery, and places emphasis on intent rather than action. This is similar to Buddhism, where intent (*cetana*) determines unwholesome karma. Intent and action are not always linked.

The essence of encratism, so difficult for ordinary people to accept, is that one must overcome attachments to pleasure in order to proceed on the path to understanding. It is necessary to conquer one's lower natures. This is the highest challenge, yet it is still possible. In GMk, the parallel to C2 is followed by another uncompromising teaching—on renouncing wealth (Mk 10:23ff.). The disciples finally exclaim in exasperation, "Who then can be saved?" (v. 26). The Marcan evangelist has Jesus reply, "With man it is impossible," in keeping with the emerging Catholic view of Jesus as universal Savior. Yet Jesus may have replied quite to the contrary, as for example: "Though indeed difficult, for man it is not impossible. When you pick up a pebble, does God do it? When you sin, does God do it? And when you don't sin, is it God who doesn't sin? Even as God doesn't intend on your behalf, so he will neither condemn you nor save you on your behalf. He has nothing to do with your salvation, or your happiness."

³ This passage (in brackets as it is from the Pauline corpus), reflects the first compromise between the strident encratism of Jesus and the exigencies of the world. Paul permits marriage, albeit reluctantly. The insistence on encratism eventually became a hallmark of heresy.

23. On Stealing

B1 “[The disciple] does not take what is not given, nor does he approve thereof.”¹
D 25.16

B2 Be it in village or wood, whosoever appropriates by theft what is the property of others, and what has not been given, let one know him as an outcast...
Sn 119

B3 Him I call indeed a Brahmin who takes nothing in the world that is not given him, be it long or short, small or large, good or bad.
Dh 409

B4 [The disciple] repudiates the taking of that which is not given, he keeps himself far from taking what is not given. He accepts that which is given, and waits for that which is given, not thievishly-minded, but with a purified heart.
M 27.13

B5 Then let the disciple abstain from taking anything in any place that has not been given, knowing it belongs to another. Let him not cause anyone to take, nor approve of those that take—let him avoid all theft.²
Sn 395

C1 “You shall not steal.”³
Mt 19:18 [Ex 20:15]

³ This straightforward prohibition is not as simple as it may seem. There are two aspects of any action: the spiritual consequences for the doer, which involve karmic reward and punishment; and the public consequences for oneself, for others, and for society. The great teachers of religion are concerned with the former. Society’s desire for order, the individual’s desire for advancement, and government’s desire for discipline are all concerned with the latter.

Sometimes the spiritual and worldly ramifications of a commandment are not identical. The prohibition against stealing is, among other things, a social requirement for order. The ethical ramifications are more complex, for karmic value lies in intent, not action. It is sometimes possible to break a law—even to steal—where the intent is not to cause harm. In such cases there is no negative karma. Robin Hood was a thief, but was his action bad or good, in that he took from those who had surfeit and gave to the impoverished?

It is possible to follow society’s laws yet to be inwardly of corrupt heart (cf. Chp 18). The key lies in the intent. If the purpose is to gain one’s own advantage even at the risk of harming others, then bad karma results.

In his behavior and sayings, Jesus emphatically favored spiritual criteria over those of society. He repudiated both received religious law and the customs of men when these violated higher spiritual laws, and affirmed them when these did not. This is an important aspect of his teaching. (The Buddha took a similar position—see Chp 5.) In themselves, the customs and laws of men carried no weight for Jesus. The record shows that he was a (very loving): vagrant (Lk 9:58; 19:5), consorter with people of low repute (Mt 11:19), family-breaker (Lk 14:25), that he was disrespectful of the Sabbath (Mk 2:23f.), of money (Mk 10:25), a reinterpreter of religious law (Mt 15:19-20, 23:23ff.; Jn 7:53ff., etc.), accused of sedition (Jn 19:12), and tried and sentenced to capital punishment. In his behavior he clearly rendered to Truth/God a great deal, and to Caesar very little.

Jesus’ unique position regarding theft is reflected in Mk 2:23-28. There, he not only breaks the law of Sabbath rest, but with his disciples takes grain from fields belonging to others. When confronted, Jesus points to the story of David eating the most holy showbread of the Presence (1 Sam 21:6). The crux is that David and those who were with him were “in need and hungry,” as was Jesus and his disciples. For Jesus, property and tradition are subordinate to need.

¹ This passage follows upon a description of the uselessness of self-mortifications, and the usefulness of observing the precepts.

² The Buddhist citations uniformly cleave to a traditional respect for property (cf. Jesus’ position, described in the following note). The Buddha himself preached against theft, as these citations witness, but not out of a concern for property so much as out of a concern for subjugation of the ego. Cf. Chps. 14, 15.

24. On Killing

B1 He who does not harm any living creature,
who does not kill or take part in killing, he, I
declare, is a holy man.

Uv 33.45

B2 All tremble at punishment,
all love life.
Remember that they are like you.
So don't kill, nor cause to be killed.

Dh 130

B3 One is not a great man because he is a
warrior and kills others; but because he hurts
not any living being he in truth is called a
great man.

Dh 270

B4 As long as they live, the Noble Ones, by
abandoning the slaying of creatures, are
abstainers from killing, have laid aside the
cudgel; they are modest, show kindness,
abide friendly and compassionate to all
creatures, to all beings.

A 3.7.70

B5 Who hurts not any living being, whether
feeble or strong, who neither kills nor causes
to kill—him I call a Brahmin.

Dh 405

B6 Going forth [into homelessness] and
adopting the mendicant's training and way of
life, he repudiates the killing of living things.
The destruction of beings stays far from him.
Without stick, without sword, sensitive, full
of empathy, he cultivates love and
compassion towards all creatures.

M 27.13

C1 "You shall not kill."¹

Mt 19:18 [Ex 20:13]

C2 "Put back your sword in its place! For all
who take the sword will perish by the
sword."

Mt 26:52

¹ It was observed in Chp. 23 (note 3) that sometimes the spiritual and worldly ramifications of a commandment are not identical. This is particularly evident in the prohibition against killing, for society condones the outright taking of human life in the cases of war and capital punishment. An indirect toleration of killing also lies in the fact that many die of want and disease in a world where ample food and medicine exist to provide for all. This unsatisfactory nature of the world has always been the case, and the Christ and the Buddha saw that the reason lies in greed, desire, and ignorance. All are born in deep darkness, endowed with a false sense of self and primed to fight for the survival of that false self. No one at first sees things as they truly are, and few indeed will ever succeed in attaining or approaching enlightenment. The rest of us promote inequality, injustice, strife, and ill-will with every new generation. A difficult fact for ordinary people to realize is that given this state of things, the world (the Buddhist *samsāra*) cannot change. Ignorance is 'built-in' with every birth. Thus, the great teachers do not try to change the world. They do not believe in the comforting delusion of a future paradise on this earth. This is not what they hope to establish. Rather, they understand the world as it is, as unsatisfactory, and they leave the world behind as one abandons a rotten piece of wood. An enlightened being is completely fulfilled and no longer needs the world. S/he is not bent upon procreation, does not partake of society nor promotes the self in any way. Yet, s/he has truly found happiness (cf. Chp. 8).

The admonition to Peter to "Put back your sword in its place!" (C2) is an acknowledgement that there is nothing *in the world* worth fighting for, worth defending, not even the very life of Jesus, which—like all of our lives—is but a transient aggregation of elements that cannot endure. On the other hand, there is something worth *spiritually* struggling for, namely understanding. Because each person ever has the possibility of attaining enlightenment, murder, harm, and hatred are proscribed, and love, encouragement, and mutual assistance are prescribed. The commandment against killing not only preserves the other's possibility for the highest happiness, but reaps good karma and furthers one's own path to Truth. Pacifist groups such as the Doukhobors, Mennonites, Jains, and Buddhists, recognize an absolute prohibition against killing. In doing so they abide by the teaching of the Masters.

25. On Lying

B1 [The disciple] repudiates lies, he keeps himself far from lying. He speaks the truth, is devoted to truth, steadfast, trustworthy, no hypocrite and flatterer of the world.

M 27.13

B2 He who says what is not goes downwards,
He who did and says “I did not.”

Both, men of base deeds,
Suffer similarly in the beyond.¹

Dh 306

B3 A man whose words are lies, who transgresses the Great Law, and who scorns the higher world—there is no evil this man may not do.²

Dh 176

B4 Let no one speak falsely to another in the hall of justice or in the hall of the assembly, let him not cause any to speak falsely, nor approve of those that speak falsely; let him avoid all sort of untruth.

Sn 397

B5 The man who—for his own sake, for the sake of others, or for the sake of wealth—speaks falsely when asked as a witness, let one know him as an outcast.

Sn 122

C1 “You shall not bear false witness.”³

Mt 19:18 [Ex 20:16]

³ Ex 20:16 is the eighth commandment given to Moses on Mt. Sinai (cf. Ex 23:1; Deut 19:15-21; 1 Kgs 21:8-14). In addition to the fact that it reaps bad karma for oneself, bearing false witness in a court of law is particularly grave because another's welfare is in the balance (B4, B5). Jesus was concerned with all shades of untruth, including hypocrisy, misrepresentation, putting on airs, and deception (cf. Chps 18, 28, 29). These are also forms of lying. Such outer signs are invariably a manifestation of inner impurity, for “no good tree brings forth evil fruit” (Lk 6:43; chp 31).

What is a lie? Is telling an untruth always wrong? The term ‘a white lie’ exists in English and refers to speaking an untruth with the intent of helping someone. This is dangerous ground, and more often than not masks the speaker's own discomfort with the truth. The truth is beneficial for both speaker and hearer when it is spoken with love.

Cultivating the habit of honesty is necessary for spiritual progress. One who is dishonest with others is dishonest with oneself, and such a person cannot perceive clearly.

The honest person is precise in speech and avoids small talk and useless chatter (cf. Chps 44, 45). He is scrupulous, and if there is the possibility of even one exception to a statement, he makes allowance for that exception or keeps silent. Like his thinking, his speech is not sloppy. Such a person is spared useless interaction and unprofitable relationships. He is accompanied by the spirit of Truth, and his spiritual progress is sure.

¹ *parattha*, “in another [existence].” Originally simply, “later,” i.e., when karmic fruit ripens in this very life. The concept was amended to accommodate the theory of rebirth.

² Transgressing the Great Law and scorning the higher world are equivalent to blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Mk 3:29).

26. Honoring One's Parents

B1 Brethren one can never repay two persons, I declare. What two? Mother and father.

Even if one should carry about his mother on one shoulder and his father on the other, and so doing should live a hundred years, and if he should support them, anointing them with unguents, massaging, bathing, and rubbing their limbs, and they meanwhile should even void their excrements upon him—even so could he not repay his parents.

Moreover, brethren, if he should establish his parents in supreme authority, in the absolute rule over this mighty earth abounding in the seven treasures— not even thus could he repay his parents. What is the reason for that? Brethren, parents do much for their children: they bring them up, they nourish them, they introduce them to this world.

Moreover, brethren, whoever spiritually leads his unbelieving parents, settles and establishes them in the faith; whoever spiritually leads his immoral parents, settles and establishes them in morality; whoever spiritually leads his stingy parents, settles and establishes them in generosity; whoever spiritually leads his foolish parents, settles and establishes them in wisdom; such a person, just by so doing, does repay— indeed, does more than repay— what is due his parents.

A 2.4.2

B2 Whoever being rich does not support mother or father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast.

Sn 124

(*Cont. next col.*)

C1 “Honor your father and mother.”

Mt 19:19 [Ex 20:12]

B3 To mother and father you should show humility, to older brother too, and fourthly to your teacher. These should you reverence, honor, and respect.

S 1.7.15

B4 Parents are called ‘Brahma,’ ‘teachers of old.’ Worthy of gifts are they, compassionate to their tribe of children. Thus the wise should venerate them and pay them due honors, should serve them with food and drink, clothing and bed, should anoint their bodies, bathe and wash their feet. Wise people praise those who, in this life, render such service to parents, and thereafter they receive heavenly joy.

It. 4.7

27. *Karma*, or the Golden Rule

B1 He who, seeking his own happiness
Injures beings who also long for happiness,
That one will not find happiness.

He who, seeking his own happiness
Does not hurt beings who also long for happiness,
That one will find happiness.

Speak not harshly to anyone
For those spoken to will answer in kind.
Hateful speech is painful—
Blows for blows will reach you.
Dh 131-133

B2 I am the result of my own deeds
Heir to my deeds. Deeds are cause,
Deeds are kin, deeds are foundation.
I am the heir of every deed I do
Good or bad,
This should be often contemplated
By woman and man
By house dweller and by one gone forth.
A 5.6.7

B3 The innocent has eternal spring
His is eternal holiday
He whose deeds are perfectly pure
Is granted his every wish.¹
M 7.20

B4 When a fool does evil work, he forgets that
he is lighting a fire wherein he must burn
some day.
Dh 136

B5 The fool who does evil to one who is good,
to one who is pure and free from sin—
the evil returns to him,
like dust thrown against the wind.
Dh 125

C1 “In everything, do to others as you would
have them do to you; for this is the Law and
the Prophets.”

Mt 7:12

C2 “I tell you, on the day of judgment you
will have to give an account for every
careless word you utter; for by your words
you will be justified, and by your words you
will be condemned.

Mt 12:36-37

C3 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged;
do not condemn, and you will not be
condemned. Forgive, and you will be
forgiven; give, and it will be given you. A
good measure, pressed down, shaken
together, running over, will be put into your
lap; for the measure you give will be the
measure you get back.”

Lk 6:37-38

C4 “If any of you put a stumbling block
before one of these little ones who believe in
me, it would be better if a great millstone
were hung around your neck and you were
thrown into the sea.”

Mk 9:42

C5 “Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name
of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward;
and whoever welcomes a righteous person in
the name of a righteous person will receive
the reward of the righteous; and whoever
gives even a cup of cold water to one of these
little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I
tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

Mt 10:41-42

¹ K.E. Neumann’s felicitous 1922 German version reads:

Dem Reinen lächelt steter Mai,
Dem Reinen steter Feiertag,
Dem Reinen der nur Reines wirkt,
Ist allezeit der Wunsch gewährt.

27. *Karma*, or the Golden Rule

B6 Whatsoever one has done, whether it be
virtuous or sinful, there are no deeds that are
of little importance—they all bear some kind
of fruit.

Uv 9.8

B7 A wrong action may not bring its reaction
at once, even as fresh milk does not turn sour
at once. Like a smoldering fire concealed
under ashes, it consumes the wrongdoer, the
fool.

Dh 71

B8 That which is his exaltation will also be
the field of his defeat—still, he talks proudly
and arrogantly. Seeing this, let no one
dispute, for the wise know that from thence
comes nothing pure.

Sn 830

B9 One may despoil another
'Til one's interests are served
But being despoiled,
The other will despoil in return.

While evil's fruit is silently maturing,
The fool thinks "Now's the chance!"
But when the deed finally bears fruit,
Suffering strikes his heart.

The slayer receives a slayer in turn
The conqueror will surely be defeated
The abuser will reap abuse
And the reviler be reviled.
Thus, by growth of the very deed
One who injures is injured in turn.

S 1.3.15

B10 For one's deeds are not lost,
They will surely return,
Their master will meet with them.
The fool who commits sin
Will come to feel the pain himself.

Sn 666

C6 "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and
earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will
pass from the law until all is accomplished.
Whoever then relaxes one of the least of
these commandments and teaches men so,
shall be called least in the kingdom of
heaven; but he who does them and teaches
them shall be called great in the kingdom of
heaven."

Mt 5:18-19

C7 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is
the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they
will be comforted.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will
receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will
see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will
be called children of God.

"Blessed are you when people revile you
and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil
against you falsely on my account. Rejoice
and be glad, for your reward is great in
heaven, for in the same way they persecuted
the prophets who were before you."

Mt 5:3-12

C8 "But woe to you who are rich, for you
have received you consolation.

"Woe to you who are full now, for you
will be hungry.

"Woe to you who are laughing now, for
you will mourn and weep.

"Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for that is what their ancestors did to the false
prophets."

Lk 6:24-26

27. *Karma*, or the Golden Rule

B11 If you fear pain, if anguish is hateful,
Then do no evil, either openly or in secret.
Do evil tomorrow or do it today
And there is no escaping suffering
Even if you spring up and flee.
Ud 5.4

B12 Brethren, in giving food, a giver gives five
things to the mendicant. What five? One
gives life, beauty, ease, strength, and wit.
And in giving these, one becomes a
partaker in life, beauty, ease, strength, and
wit, in heaven and on earth.
A 5.4.7

B13 On his safe return
Relatives, well-wishers, and friends
Joyfully welcome one long far away;
So also, on his safe return
Good works, like relatives, receive the dear one
Who has forsaken this world for another.¹
Dh 219-220

B14 The armed man who harms those who are
defenseless and pure will soon fall into one of
these ten evils: terrible pain, infirmity, loss of
limbs, debilitating disease, madness and the
loss of his mind, persecution by the authorities,
the loss of possessions, of relatives, or fire
from heaven that may burn his house.
Dh 137-140a

B15 At the rod all do tremble,
Unto all is life dear
Putting yourself in his place
Kill not, nor make him fear.
Dh 130

C9 “And forgive us our debts, as we also have
forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive
others their trespasses, your heavenly Father
will also forgive you; but if you do not
forgive others, neither will your Father
forgive your trespasses.” Mt 6:12, 14-15

C10 “For all who exalt themselves will be
humbled, and those who humble themselves
will be exalted.” Lk 14:11

C11 “There was a rich man who was dressed in
purple and fine linen and who feasted
sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a
poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,
who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell
from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would
come and lick his sores. The poor man died
and was carried away by the angels to be with
Abraham. The rich man also died and was
buried. In Hades, where he was being
tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham afar
off with Lazarus by his side. He called out,
‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send
Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and
cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these
flames.’; But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember
that during your lifetime you received your
good things; and Lazarus in like manner evil
things; but now he is comforted here, and you
are in agony. Besides all this, between you and
us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those
who might want to pass from here to you
cannot do so, and no one can cross from there
to us.’ He said, ‘Then father, I beg you to send
him to my father’s house—for I have five
brothers—that he may warn them, so that they
will not also come into this place of torment.’
Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the
prophets; they should listen to them.’ He said,
‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to
them from the dead, they will repent.’; He said
to him, ‘Neither will they be convinced even if
someone rises from the dead.’” Lk 16:19-31

¹ Many of the world’s religions proclaim the Golden Rule.
Thus, the Mahabharata: “Do not do to others that which if
done to you would cause you pain—this is the sum of
duty” (5.1517).

28. On Defilement

B1 “Destroying living beings, killing, cutting, binding, stealing, speaking falsehood, fraud and deception, useless studies, intercourse with another’s wife—these are what defile one, but not the eating of flesh.

“Living in this world unrestrained in sensual pleasures, greedy of sweet things, associating with what is impure, hard-hearted, unjust, difficult to follow—these are what defile one, but not the eating of flesh.

“Being rough, harsh, backbiting, treacherous, merciless, arrogant, stingy and not giving ought to anyone—these are what defile one, but not the eating of flesh.

“Anger, intoxication, obstinacy, bigotry, deceit, envy, grandiloquence, pride and conceit, intimacy with the unjust—these are what defile one, but not the eating of flesh.

“Being wicked, not paying one’s debts, slandering, dealing falsely, dissembling and otherwise constituting the lowest of sinners—these are what defile one, but not the eating of flesh.

“Living in this world unrestrained towards other beings, bent upon injury after taking another’s goods, going about with malice, cruelty, harshness, disrespect—these are what defile one, but not the eating of flesh.”

Sn 242-247

C1 Then [Jesus] called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. He said to them, “Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.)

And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Mk 7:14-23

29. Inner Cleansing

B1 He who wishes to put on the yellow robe [of the monk] without having cleansed himself from sin, who disregards also temperance and truth, is unworthy of the yellow robe.

But he who has cleansed himself from sin, who is well-grounded in all virtues and endowed with temperance and truth: he is indeed worthy of the yellow robe.

Dh 9-10

B2 Not by outward garb is a man correctly known
Place no confidence in a fleeting glance
For dressed as decent, well-behaved folk
The unruly live at large in the world.

Like an earring made of clay
Or a penny dipped in gold
Some walk the land hidden 'neath a disguise.
Outside they are comely, but vile inside.

S 1.3.11

B3 Brahmin, don't suppose that purity comes by
heaping up wood for the sacrifice—
that is external.
The wise know well that outer things do not
make one inwardly pure.

Brahmin, I heap no wood for fires
The fire I light is within.
Eternal it burns, ever warming and true
Radiating out from the Noble One's life.

S 1.7.9

B4 O foolish ascetic,
Of what use is your braided hair?
Of what use your garment of hide?
The outside you preen
But what of the jungle inside?

Dh 394

C1 "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel!

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. So you outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Mt 23:23-28

C2 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits."

Mt 7:15-16

C3 "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that is exalted among men is abomination in the sight of God."

Lk 16:15

29. Inner Cleansing

B5 Many a one wears the yellow robe
Yet wanders wicked and wanton.
His evil deeds plunge him into deep hell.
'Tis better to swallow a red hot bronze ball
Than wicked and wanton to eat the land's food.
It. 2.2.11

B6 Place no confidence in that self-serving
person who thinks one is well-controlled by
the appearance of one's garb— for indeed, one
may be poorly-controlled and deceitful.

Deceitful like the color of brass
Like iron coated with gold
Is he whose manner is polished
Who wanders about with great show
But whose inside is poisonous gall.
Uv 29:11-12

B7 [*A Brahmin proposed to purify himself by bathing in the sacred Ganges River. The Buddha addresses him:*] "Bathe in this, O Brahmin, in this alone: be kind to all beings. For if you do not lie, if you do not kill, if you do not take what is not given, and if you are secure in self-denial—what would you gain by going to the Ganges? Any water will be Ganges for you."

B8 "Brethren, even if a person should seize the hem of my garment and walk behind me step for step, yet if he be covetous in his desires, fierce in his longing, malevolent of heart, corrupt of mind, careless and unrestrained, not quieted but scatter-brained and uncontrolled in sense, that person is far from me and I am far from him. Why? Brethren, that person does not see *dharma*. Not seeing *dharma*, he doesn't see me."

It. 3.5.3

C4 And Jesus took the disciples with him into the place of purification itself, and walked about in the Temple courtyard. And a chief priest of the Pharisees, Levi by name, fell in with them and said to the savior, "Who gave you leave to walk in this place of purification and to look on these holy utensils without having bathed yourself and without your disciples even having washed their feet? On the contrary, being defiled, you have trodden the Temple courtyard, this pure place, although no one who has not first bathed himself or changed his clothes may tread it and venture to view these holy utensils!"

Then the savior stood still with his disciples and answered, "How stands it with you, then? You also are here in the Temple courtyard. Are you then clean?"

He said to him, "I am clean. For I have bathed myself in the pool of David and have gone down by the one stair and come up by the other and have put on white and clean clothes, and only then have I come here and have viewed these holy utensils."

Then the savior said to him, "Woe to you that are blind and unperceiving! You have washed yourself in water that is poured out, in which dogs and swine lie night and day, and you have washed yourself and rubbed your outer skin, which prostitutes also and flute-girls anoint, bathe, rub and rouge, in order to arouse desire in men, but within they are full of scorpions and wickedness of every kind! But I and my disciples, of whom you say that we have not immersed ourselves, have been immersed in the living water which comes down from [heaven]."

POxy 840

29. Inner Cleansing

B9 “Brethren, consider a great heap of corn being winnowed. The grain which is good and has substance is piled to one side, but the grain of poor quality is put to the other side. The wind carries off the mere chaff, and immediately the husbandmen sweep the poor grain still further away with brooms. And why? They say, ‘Don’t let it degrade the good corn.’”

“In the same way, brethren, a disciple comes and goes and seems the same as all the other brethren of worth. But once they see his baseness they realize, “This recluse is the height of corruption, he is the chaff of recluseship, the sweepings of the holy life.” They then oust him from their midst... so that he may not degrade the brethren of merit.”

A 8.1.10

B10 One does not become pure by washing,
As the multitudes are wont to do.
One becomes pure by doing away with sins,
By casting them off, both great and small.
Verily, that one is a Brahmin.

Uv 33.13

C5 “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’”

Mt 9:13a

C6 “Out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

Mt 15:19-20

30. Poor and Good Soil

B1 “Brethren, seed sown in eight kinds of field is not very fruitful, does not ripen to great sweetness nor to great abundance. What are the eight kinds of field?

“Consider a field that is hilly, rocky, salty, with thin soil, in a dry climate, without a water source for irrigation, nor way for the water to run off, nor dyke to hold water in case of flooding. Brethren, seed sown in such a field is not very fruitful, does not ripen to great sweetness nor to great abundance.

“Similarly, gifts given to eight kinds of people are not very fruitful, advantageous, splendid, or rewarding. What are the eight kinds of people?

“Consider, brethren, recluses and others who have wrong views, wrong intentions, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong concentration. So possessed, gifts to them are not very fruitful, advantageous, splendid, or rewarding.”

A 8.4.4

C1 “Listen! A sower went out to sow, and as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”...

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Mt 13:3-9, 18-23

31. Seed / Tree and Fruit

B1 Whatever a person has done, whether they be virtuous or sinful deeds, there are none that are of little importance. They all bear some kind of fruit.
Uv 9:8

B2 Just as a flower which seems beautiful and has color but no perfume, so are the fruitless words of the person who speaks them but does them not.
Dh 51

B3 “Suppose, brethren, the seed of a bitter gourd or a nimb-seed or a seed of creeper is planted in moist soil. Whatever sustenance it derives from earth and water, all that promotes bitterness, acidity, and unpleasant taste. Why is that? Because the nature of the seed is bad.

“Similarly, brethren, consider a person of wrong view, wrong thinking, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wrong knowledge and release. Whatever action of body he brings to completion, whatever thought he carries through in speech, whatever intention, aspiration, resolve or other mental activities he may have—these all conduce to what is unpleasant and painful, not to what is delightful, charming and profitable. Why is that? Because, brethren, his view is wrong.

“Now suppose a cutting of sugar cane or seed of grape, or perhaps a grain of rice is planted in moist soil. Whatever sustenance it derives from the earth and water, all that promotes its sweetness and good flavor. Why is that? Because the nature of the source is good.

“Even so, brethren, consider a person of right view, right thinking, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, right knowledge and release. Whatever action of body he brings to completion, whatever thought he carries through in speech, whatever intention, aspiration, resolve or other mental activities he may have—these all conduce to what is pleasant and not painful, to what is delightful, charming and profitable. Why is that? Because, brethren, his view is right.”

C1 “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of the evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.”

Lk 6:43-45

C2 And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Mk 7:20-23

32. Hidden Made Manifest

B1 Nowhere can you cover up your sin,
Your own self knows what is true and false.
You scorn the noble conscience,
Thinking to hide your evil self
From the self who witnessed it.

A 3.40

C1 Jesus said, “Do not tell lies, and do not do what you hate, for all things are plain in the sight of truth. For nothing hidden will not become manifest.”

Th 6b

Th 6b

C2 “Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops.”
Lk 12:2-3

33. Physical and Spiritual Injury

B1 “Brethren, which of these two situations is better: that one should sit or lie caressing a great burning, fiery mass; or that one should sit or lie caressing a fair maiden whose hands and feet are soft, of noble or landed birth?”

“Surely, Lord, it were better to sit or lie caressing a fair maiden. Horrible indeed would it be to caress a great, burning, fiery mass.”

“Yet I say to you that it would be better for a wicked man to caress a great, burning, fiery mass than to caress a fair maiden. And why? Because, brethren, upon caressing a fiery mass he may suffer death or pain amounting to death; nevertheless, on the breaking up of the body he will not on that account arise in hell, in the abyss, the downward way.”

A 7.7.8

C1 “If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where the worm dies not and the fire is never quenched.”

Mk 9:43-48

34. True Relatives

B1 A man does not become a Brahmin by long hair, by family, or by birth. The man in whom there is truth and holiness, who lives in joy, he is a Brahmin.

Dh 393

B2 Whether from the nobility, the Brahmin class, a laborer, or even from the Pariah class, whoever puts forth effort, whoever applies his entire strength, that one advances with indomitable stride— he attains supreme purity.

S 1.7.7

B3 “Vasettha, all of you [disciples] who have left home for the homeless life differ in birth, in name, in clan and family. I asked, ‘Who are you?’ Say, ‘We are holy men¹ and disciples of the son of the Sakyas.’²

“He whose faith in the Enlightened One is established, rooted, and firm, that is a faith not to be deterred by recluse or priest, by spirit, devil, or god, or anything in the world. Well may such a one claim, ‘I am a true son of the Exalted One, born from his mouth, begotten by, created by, and heir to the law of Truth³ and Righteousness.’”

D 27.9

C1 While Jesus was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside asking to speak with him. But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Mt 12:46-50

C2 “You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

Jn 15:14-15

¹ *Samanā*, often translated “recluses”, “wanderers.” The word “shaman” derives from the same root.

² Siddhartha Gautama came from the clan of the Sakyas, a tribe living near the southern slopes of the Himalayas in what is present-day Nepal.

³ *dhamma*.

35. On Works

B1 Just as a flower which seems beautiful and has color but no perfume, so are the fruitless words of the man who speaks them but does not carry them out. Dh 51

B2 “Brethren, these two things sear [the conscience]. What two? Firstly, one has done no lovely deed, no profitable deed, has given no shelter to the needy. Secondly, he has done evil, cruel, wrongful deeds. At the thought, ‘I have done no lovely deed,’ he is tormented. At the thought ‘I have done evil’ he is tormented.

“Brethren, these two things do not sear [the conscience]. What two? Firstly, one has done a lovely deed, a profitable deed, has given shelter to the needy. Secondly, he has not done evil, cruel, wrongful deeds. At the thought, ‘I have done a lovely deed,’ he is pacified.¹ At the thought ‘I have not done evil’ he is pacified.”² It 2.1.4-5

B3 “What is gained by [repeating] stanzas is not enjoyed by me, O Brahmin. It is not the practice of Buddhas. The way of Truth, so long as it exists, is their way of life.

“With other offerings should you serve an accomplished, great sage, one whose passions are destroyed and whose misbehavior has ceased, for here one looks for good works.” Sn 480-481

B4 Though he can recite a large portion of holy writ, the thoughtless person who does it not is like a cowherd counting the cows of others. Dh 19

C1 “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Mt 7:21

C2 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation on rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.” Lk 6:46-49

C3 “Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.” Mt 11:19b

C4 “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so practice and observe what they tell you, but do not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. They bind heavy burdens, and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with their little finger.” Mt 23:2-4

C5 “What to you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he relented and went. And the father went to the second son and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he didn’t go. Which of the two did the will of his father?”

[The chief priests and the elders] replied, “The first.”

Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” Mt 21:28-31

¹ Lit. “not tormented.”

² Useless ceremonies are castigated in Asoka’s rock edict No. 9: “In times of sickness... marriage... birth... before embarking on a journey, [etc.] people perform various ceremonies. Women in particular perform many vulgar and worthless ceremonies. These kinds of ceremonies can be performed by all means, but they bear little fruit. What does bear great fruit, however, is the ceremony of the Dhamma. This involves proper behavior... [etc.]”

36. Finding Fault in Others

B1 Think not of the faults of others, of what
they have done or not done. Think rather of
your own faults, of what you have done or not
done.¹

Dh 50

B2 'Tis easy to see the faults of others,
But hard to see one's own.
Like chaff thrown up to the wind
For all to see,
One openly exhibits another's faults
While cunningly concealing one's own—
Like a gambler with loaded dice.

Forever seeing the faults of others,
Forever contemplating their foibles,
Forever one's own faults will increase—
Far off is he from the end of sins.

Dh 252-253

C1 “Why do you see the speck that is in your
brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is
in your own eye? Or how can you say to your
brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that
is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see
the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite,
first take the log out of your own eye, and then
you will see clearly to take out the speck that is
in your brother's eye.”

Lk 6:41-42

C2 [The scribes and the Pharisees] said to him,
“Teacher, this woman was caught in the very
act of committing adultery. Now in the law,
Moses commanded us to stone such women.
What do you say?” This they said to test him,
that they might have some charge to bring
against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with
his finger on the ground. And as they
continued to ask him, he stood up and said to
them, “Let him who is without sin among you
be the first to cast a stone at her.”

Jn 8:4-5, 7

¹ “Investigate not the faults in others, what they have or
have not done. Investigate rather you own just and unjust
deeds.” Gandhari Dhammapada 271.

37. Offending the Innocent

B1 If one offend a harmless, pure, and innocent person, the evil falls back upon that fool, like dirt thrown against the wind.

Dh 125

C1 “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea.”

Mk 9:42

B2 Surely, he who offends an innocent person who has done no ill deed—on the doer, corrupt of heart and irreverent, that ill recoils.

It. 3.4.10

B3 “I declare that in the reviling of outsiders there is not so great a pit dug for oneself as in the reviling of one’s fellows in the godly life.”

A 6.5.12

B4 The armed man who harms those who are defenseless and pure will soon fall into one of these ten evils: terrible pain, infirmity, loss of limbs, debilitating disease, madness and the loss of his mind, persecution by the authorities, the loss of possessions, of relatives, or fire from heaven that may burn his house.

Dh 137-140a

38. On Anger

B1 Beware of anger expressed physically—let your body be self-controlled. Cause no injury with the body, but use your body well.

Beware of anger expressed through speech— let your speech be self-controlled. Cause no injury with your words, but use your speech well.

Beware of anger in the mind—let your mind be self-controlled. Cause no injury in your thoughts, but use your mind well.

There are men who are steady and wise, whose body, words, and thoughts are self-controlled. They are the men of supreme self-control.
Dh 231-234

B2 When anger conquers a man blind darkness reigns. The angry person finds pleasure in bad deeds as in good deeds; but later, when his wrath has abated, he suffers like one scorched by fire.
A 7.6.10

B3 To every person that is born an axe is also born in his mouth, by which the fool cuts himself when uttering unwholesome words.
Sn 657

B4 With mind alert, growing calm and still—
This alone stops the fool filled with rage.
S 1.11.5

B5 Him I call a Brahmin indeed from whom anger and hatred, pride and hypocrisy fall off as easily as a mustard seed falls off the point of a needle.

Him I call a Brahmin indeed whose speech is true, illuminating, and free from harshness so that he offends none.
Dh 407-408

C1 “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be liable to the hell of fire.”

Mt 5:21-22

B6 “He insulted me! He beat me!
He defeated me! He cheated me!”
By nursing such thoughts
will hatred never end.

“He insulted me! He beat me!
He defeated me! He cheated me!”
By abandoning such thoughts
will hatred end.

For here is an eternal law:
Through hatred never does hatred cease
By love alone does it end.

Dh 3-5

39. The Spiritually Dead

B1 “Brethren, possessing four qualities the foolish, sinful, unworthy person carries about an uprooted, lifeless self,¹ is blameworthy, censured by the wise, and begets much demerit. What four qualities? By bad conduct of body, bad conduct in speech, bad thoughts, and by wrong view.”

A 4.23.2

C1 “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”¹

Mk 8:22

C2 “Woe to you, Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honor in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it.”

Lk 11:43-44

¹ ‘Death’ and ‘lifelessness’ are metaphors for ignorance and sin. The goal of the disciple is, through effort, to pass into “life,” universally symbolized by light, wisdom, and purity. More specifically, in the Buddhist tradition life is *nirvana*, enlightenment, emptiness. In Christian thought it is salvation, the kingdom of heaven (or ‘of the Father’), and also emptiness (cf. Th 97). The great transition from death to life is symbolized in Buddhism by the ‘moment’ of enlightenment, and in Christianity by baptism. The early connection between enlightenment and baptism was suppressed in Pauline orthodoxy (for that would recognize gnosis and invalidate belief), yet hints of this link survive in the early scriptures and in the writings of the Church Fathers, hints which show pre-Pauline Christianity to have been a mystery religion of transformation.

The transformation ritualized in baptism long predated Christianity and was virtually universal in pagan religions, which were quintessentially gnostic. The descent into water (a symbol of gnosis) was a great celebration in Hierapolis (Lucian, *De Dea Syria* 47), and was venerated already in Bronze Age Mesopotamia. A great basin of water was to be found in temples (even in Solomon’s temple, 1 Kg 7:23–39). Oannes, Atargatis (Derketo), Lahmu, and the Greek god Glaucos were all half-human/half fish, representing the possibility of self-transformation through water/gnosis. In this sense, the mystical sayings and transforming parables of “Jesus” brought nothing new. But the world moved away from its age-old gnosticism and, in so doing, created what we call “civilization.”

40. On Repentance

B1¹ “Wrong overcame me, Lord, weak and foolish and wrong that I am, in that for the sake of ruling I put my father, that righteous king, to death. May the Blessed One accept this confession from me, Lord, in that I now acknowledge it as wrong, and resolve in the future to ever restrain myself.”

“Truly, O king, it was indeed wrong that overcame you in acting as you did. Yet, insofar as you now regard it as wrongful, and heartfully confess your fault, we accept your confession. For this, O king, is the manner and custom in the discipline of the Noble Ones, that whoever perceives his fault as fault, and heartfully confesses it, will attain self-restraint in future.” D 2.99-100

B2 Who before was irresponsible, foolish
But now recognizes his fault,
Like the moon between the clouds of night
Such a person shines light into this dark world.
Who with remorse repents his evil deed
Truly and deeply
Like the moon between the clouds of night
Such a person shines light into this dark world.
M 86.18

C1 [Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: “Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing apart, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—thieves,

rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I say to you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.” Lk 18:9-14

C2 Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later, the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of you hired hands.”’” But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out a robe, the best one, and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.” Lk 15:11-24

¹ The speaker is Ajatasattu, king of Magadha, who gained the throne by putting to death his righteous father, King Bimbisara. This passage occurs towards the end of the second discourse in the ‘Longer Collection’ (*Digha Nikaya*). Magadha was the largest kingdom in Northern India during the Buddha’s time. The skillfully written discourse portrays a king who, unable to sleep for remorse, visits the Buddha with his retinue in the heart of night. Ajatasattu fears his own son’s violent temperament and wishes that his son might become a peaceable monk. As it happened, Ajatasattu was in turn slain by his son, karmically receiving in like manner as he acted.

41. On Meekness

- B1 He who is tolerant with the intolerant
Who patiently endures punishment
And is merciful to all beings
That person I call holy.
Uv 33:46
- B2 Truly, I call that person a Brahmin who,
Though innocent, endures stripes and bonds,
Whose strength is forbearance,
Powerful as any army.
Dh 399
- B3 Receiving in good time food and requisites,
Be content knowing moderation in this life.
Moving about the village with self-control,
Be guarded— if angry utter no harsh words.

With downcast eyes that pry not
Devoted to meditation, alert, and even-tempered
Cut the root of misbehavior,
With mind composed and free from doubt.
Sn 971-972
- B4 Conquer anger by love
Conquer evil by good
Conquer greed by giving
Conquer lies by truth.
Dh 223
- B5 ‘Meek,’ such is the name I bear
Though aggressive was I in the past
Most truly am I so named today
For none do I harm any more.
ThG 879
- B6 Never harsh in deed, word, or thought
Never inflicting harm on the other
Such a one is well called meek.
S 1.7.5
- C1 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit
the earth.”
Mt 5:5
- C2 “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from
me; for I am gentle and humble in spirit, and
your hearts will find rest.”
Mt 11:29
- C3 “When he noticed how the guests chose the
places of honor, he told them a parable. “When
you are invited by someone to a wedding
banquet, don’t sit down at the place of honor,
lest someone more distinguished than you has
been invited by your host; and the host who
invited both of you may come and say to you,
‘Give this person your place.’ But when you are
invited, go and sit down at the lowest place so
that when your host comes, he may say to you,
‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be
honored in the presence of all who sit at the table
with you. For all who exalt themselves will be
humbled, and those who humble themselves will
be exalted.”
Lk 14:7-11
- C4 “[W]hoever wishes to become great among
you must be your servant, and whoever wishes
to be first among you must be slave of all.”
Mk 10:43-44
- C5 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to
them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of
all and servant of all.”
Mk 9:35

41. On Meekness

B7 Brethren, many a disciple is gentle, mild, and tranquil only when encountering pleasant speech. However, brethren, it is when encountering unpleasant speech that one should be found gentle, mild, and tranquil.

M 21.10

B8 Worse of the two is he who when abused
Abuses in return.

Who does not do so receives twofold victory:
His own good, and the welfare of his abuser.
For he understands the other's angry mood
And both grow calm and still.

S 1.11.4

B9 He who skillfully seeks what is good
Attains the state of peace
He is upright and conscientious,
Soft spoken, gentle, and meek.

Sn 143

B10 Brethren, when rebuked, a disciple does not rebuke in return. If, brethren, when rebuke one does not retaliate, this bodes well for that person.

M 15.9

B11 "He insulted me! He beat me!
He defeated me! He cheated me!"
By nursing such thoughts
will hatred never end.

"He insulted me! He beat me!
He defeated me! He cheated me!"
By abandoning such thoughts
will hatred end.

For here is an eternal law:
Through hatred never does hatred cease
By love alone does it end.

Dh 3-5

C6 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you."

Mt 5:38-42

C7 "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Mt 18:4

C8 [Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing apart, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I say to you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

Lk 18:9-14

41. On Meekness

B12 Those who, having embraced a view, dispute and maintain, “Only this is true!”—when a dispute has arisen, say to them, “Here is no opponent for you.”

Sn 832

B13 Now, so-called ‘Reviler’¹ of the Bharadvaja Brahmins heard that the head of the clan had renounced the world to enter the order of Gautama the Recluse. Vexed and displeased, he sought out the Exalted One, and upon finding him began to revile him with much rude and harsh speech.

After he had finished, the Exalted One asked: “Do you, Brahmin, receive visits from friends or colleagues, from your kin by blood or by marriage, or from guests?”

“Yes, sometimes I do.”

“And if they do not accept your hospitality, Brahmin, whose do those things [with which you would treat them] become?”

“If they do not accept, those things are for me.”

“So also here, Brahmin. That wherewith you revile us who revile not, wherewith you scold us who scold not, that wherewith you abuse us who abuse not, that we do not accept at your hands. It is for you only, Brahmin. It is entirely yours!

“He, Brahmin, who reviles again at his reviler, who scolds back, who abuses the one who abused him—that, Brahmin, is as if you and your visitors dined together and made good. We neither dine together with you nor make good. It is for you only, Brahmin. Your abuse is entirely yours!”

S 1.7.2

B14 “Thus, brethren, should you train yourselves: I will dwell in mind like a young wife newly arrived. That is how you should train yourselves.”

A 4.8.4

C9 “Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.”

Lk 6:30

C10 “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Mt 5:10-11

¹ According to the famous commentator Buddhaghosa (V CE), he was so called because he authored a lampoon of five hundred verses against the Buddha.

41. On Meekness

B15 If, like a shattered gong you utter nothing,
Then you have reached *Nirvana*;
Anger is not known to you.
Dh 134

B16 He who bears abuse, blows, confinement,
Even death patiently, peacefully, and meekly
He is a hero of endurance, spiritually well-armed;
Him I call a Brahmin.
M 98.11 (120)

B17 I will endure words that hurt in silent peace,
as the strong elephant endures in battle arrows
sent by the bow, for many are the people who
lack self-control.
Trained elephants go into battle, and kings
ride on the most highly trained among them, but
the best of men going into spiritual battle are
self-trained, those who meet abuse with peace.
Dh 320-321

C11 But when [Jesus] was accused by the chief
priests and elders, he made no answer. Then
Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many
things they testify against you?” But he gave
him no answer, not even to a single charge; so
that the governor wondered greatly.
Mt 27:12-14

42. The Holy Sufferer

B1 There is he who does not indulge his passions,
 Who does no wrong deed.
 With suffering and dejection
 With tearful face and lamentation
 He lives the good life here in the world,
 Completely and utterly fulfilled.
 He is called “a person going against the stream.”
 A 4.1.5

B2 One who wears rags from a dust heap
 Alone and meditating in the forest
 Lean, his veins visible over his body—
 Such a one I call a Brahmin.
Dh 415

B3 Truly, I call that person a Brahmin who,
Though innocent, endures stripes and bonds,
Whose strength is forbearance,
Powerful as any army.

Dh 399

C1 And he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.”

Lk 9:23-24

C2 “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Lk 9:58

C3 “See, we are going out to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will hand him over to the gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.”

Mk 10:33-34

C4 “What did you go out to the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.”

Mt 11:7-9

C5 The true light, which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world. He was in the world,
and the world came into being through him; yet
the world did not know him. He came to what
was his own, and his own people did not accept
him.

Jn 1:9-11

43. On Watchfulness

B1 Like a border town guarded within and without
So guard yourself.
From a careless moment
Comes suffering and pain;
Let not even a moment pass unawares.
Dh 315

B2 Delight in diligence; guard well your mind.
Uplift yourself from your lower self
As an elephant struggles out of a swamp.
Dh 327

B3 As rain seeps into an ill-thatched house
So passions seep into an ill-guarded mind.

As rain seeps not into a well-thatched house
Passions seep not into a well-guarded mind.
Dh 13-14

B4 In seeing any form, the disciple does not
become enraptured with it, develops no intention
regarding it. He applies himself to watchfulness, is
alert and keenly aware of what he sees, lest desire
and ill-humor, untoward and base thoughts soon
overwhelm him were he to persist with unguarded
sight.

When the disciple hears any sound, smells any
odor, tastes any flavor, touches any surface, even
thinks of anything, he does not become enraptured
with it, develops no intention regarding it. He
applies himself to watchfulness, is alert and keenly
aware of what he senses or thinks, lest desire and ill-
humor, untoward and base thoughts soon
overwhelm him were he to persist with unguarded
mind.

M 1.180

B5 Never yield to carelessness, never give in to
weak pleasures and lust. Those who are
watchful, in deep contemplation, in the end
reach the joy supreme.

Dh 27

C1 “Take heed, watch! For you do not know
when the time will come. It is like a man going
on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his
servants in charge, each with his work, and
commands the doorkeeper to be on watch.
Watch therefore, for you know not when the
master of the house will come, in the evening, or
at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning,
lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And
what I say to you I say to all: watch!”
Mk 13:33-37

C2 “But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts
be weighed down with dissipation and
drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day
come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will
come upon all who dwell upon the face of the
whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that
you may have strength to escape all these things
that will take place, and to stand before the Son
of man.”

Lk 21:34-36

C3 “Let your loins be girded and your lamps
burning, and be like men who are waiting for
their master to come home from the marriage
feast, so that they may open to him at once when
he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants
whom the master finds awake when he comes;
truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have
them sit at table, and he will come and serve
them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the
third, and finds them so, blessed are those
servants! But know this, that if the householder
had known at what hour the thief was coming,
he would not have left his house to be broken
into. You also must be ready; for the Son of man
is coming at an unexpected hour.”

Lk 12:35-40

C4 Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the
devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking
some one to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

43. On Watchfulness

B6 And how is a monk given to watchfulness?

Herein, by day he walks up and down and sits, cleansing his heart [the whole time] of things that he must check. In the first watch of the night he does likewise. In the middle watch of the night, lying on his right side, he takes up the lion posture, resting one foot on the other, and thus collected and composed, fixes his thoughts on rising again. In the last watch of the night, at early dawn, he walks up and down, then sits, and in this way cleanses his heart of things that he must check. That is how a monk is given to watchfulness.

A 3.2.16

B7 Those who are ever careful in their actions, who desist from what should not be done, they are watchful and wise, and in them the defilements¹ come to an end.

Dh 293

B8 Forever watchful,
Studying themselves day and night,
Wholly striving for Nirvana—
Their defilements¹ all pass away.

Dh 226

B9 Whose heart is not dry,
Whose thinking is not crippled,
Having left behind good and evil—
For him, the vigilant one, there is no fear.

Dh 39

B10 Blesséd is self-control
In deed, in word, in thought.
Guarded we call the watchful man
In all self-controlled.

S 1.3.5

B11 Watch, disciple! Be in high contemplation, and do not think of pleasure, so that you needn't think of pain, as do those in the fire of hell who have to swallow a red-hot ball of iron.

Dh 371

C5 And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep?" Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Mk 14:37-38

C6 He went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God.

Lk 6:12

C7 And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled; Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death; remain here, and watch with me."

Mt 26:37-38

B12 Wherefore, disciple, thus train yourself:
I will strengthen my guard over the senses, I will be moderate in eating, bent on vigilance, directed to righteous things, and I will live, day in and day out, furthering the practice of developing those things which become wings to enlightenment.

A 5.6.6

B13 Awaken! Rouse yourself by yourself;
Train yourself by yourself;
Ever watchful, you will live in supreme bliss!

D 379²

¹ *asavā*

² The entire second chapter of the Dhammapada (vss. 21-32) is dedicated to 'Watchfulness.'

44. On Speech

B1 [The disciple] repudiates gruff speech, from rough speech he keeps himself distant. He utters such words as are free of abuse, pleasing to the ear, affectionate, entering the heart, polite, greatly gladdening, and highly uplifting.

M 27.13

B2 Speak not harshly to anyone; those who are spoken to will answer in the same manner. Angry speech is painful—blows for blows will strike you.

Dh 133

B3 Him I indeed call a Brahmin who utters what is true, what is instructive and free from harshness, so that he offends no one.

Dh 408

B4 Once, the Exalted One was staying near Savatthi at Jeta Grove in Anathapindika's Park. On that occasion a number of disciples, after returning from alms-round and eating their meal, gathered in the service-hall and sat down. While there they indulged in all kinds of aimless talk, such as talk about kings, robbers, great personages, armies, battle and mayhem, food and childish talk about drink, clothes, beds, flowers, garlands and perfumes, talk about relatives, conveyances, villages, towns, cities, and districts, talk about women and champions, about gossip in the streets and at the well, ghost-stories, desultory talk, fables about land and sea, and talk about all sorts of news and non-news.

At evening time, the Exalted One rose from his solitude and went towards the Service Hall. [Overhearing the hubbub], he addressed his disciples: "Brethren, it is not seemly that you clansmen, who have gone forth from the home life to the homeless life in faith, should indulge in such talk. There are these ten topics of talk. What ten?"

"Talk about wanting little, about contentment, about seclusion, solitude, energetic striving, virtue, concentration, insight, release, and liberation by understanding and experience. These, brethren, are the ten topics of talk.

C1 "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill, and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire."

Mt 5:21-22

C2 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white of black."

Mt 5:33-36

C3 "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Mt 12:33-37

[B4—cont.]

"Brethren, if you should engage again and again in talk on these ten topics, you would outshine in brilliance even the brilliance of moon and sun, which are of such mighty power and majesty—not to speech of the brilliance of the wanderers who hold other views."

A 10.7.9

45. On Succinct Speech

B1 Dull repetition is the rust of sacred verses.
Dh 241a

B2 One is not called wise because one talks and
talks again; but one is in truth called wise if one
is peaceful, loving, and fearless.
Dh 258

B3 [The disciple] repudiates chatter and prattle,
from these he distances himself. He speaks at the
right time, keeping to the subject. His speech is
considered and to the point, faithful to the
teaching and the order.
M 27.13

B4 Nay, though one jabber a multitude of runes,
Garbage-defiled within, propped up by deceits,
Thus is no Brahmin made well.
S 1.7.7

B5 One sensible sentence bringing calm when heard
Is better than a thousand senseless words;
One line of poetry bringing calm when heard
Is better than a hundred senseless lines composed;
One line of the Doctrine bringing calm when heard
Is better than recitation without end.
Dh 100-102

B6 “What is gained by [repeating] stanzas is
not enjoyed by me, O Brahmin. It is not the
practice of Buddhas. The way of Truth, so long
as it exists, is their way of life.”
Sn 480

C1 “When you are praying, do not heap up empty
phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that
they will be heard because of their many words.”
Mt 6:7

C2 “Let your word be, ‘Yes, Yes,’ or ‘No, No’;
anything more than this comes from evil.”
Mt 5:37

C3 “This people honors me with their lips, but
their hearts are far from me; in vain do they
worship me, teaching human precepts as
doctrines.”
Mt 15:8-9
[Is 29:13]

46. Entrapment with Words

B1 “Now further, Brahmin,¹ I have seen some learned priests, experienced and delicate in argumentation, who seem to split hairs, who cut in two, so to speak, the most fine of views with their wit. To them it was made known: ‘Gautama the recluse will himself be visiting this village or that town in his peregrinations.’ So they conjured up a dilemma: ‘We will put this question to Gautama the recluse. If he answers in such and such a way then we will twist his words in this manner, but if he answers in such and such a way then we will twist his words in that manner’... And then they betook themselves to where Gautama was. And Gautama the recluse encouraged them, heartened them, aroused them, and exhilarated them with his sermons full of teaching. They did not ask Gautama their question, much less did they wish to twist his words. On the contrary, they became followers of Gautama the recluse.”

M 27.4

B2 “Prince,² ask the recluse Gautama this double-edged question, so that he can neither twist out of it this way, nor twist out of it that way; just as a man with an iron ring around his neck would not be able to get out of it by twisting this way, nor by twisting that way.”

M 58.3

C1 And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to entrap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men; but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a coin, and let me look at it.” And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. And they were amazed at him.”³

Mk 12:13-17

C2 As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, lying in wait for him, to catch him at something he might say.

Lk 11:53-54

C3 And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and elders came to him, and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?” Jesus said to them, “I will ask you a question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Answer me.” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then, did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘From men?’” (They were afraid of the people, for all held that John was a great prophet.) So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Mk 11:27-33

¹ Vechayano Polotika, a pilgrim, is speaking to the Brahmin Janussoni.

² Abhayo, the king’s son, is here enlisted by Natthaputto to entrap the Buddha. Natthaputto is another name for Mahavira, the archleader of a rival sect, the Free Brothers (Jains).

³ The parallel Lucan passage adds: And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him by what he said; but marveling at his answer they were silent (20:26).

47. The Sending of the Disciples

B1 On another occasion at the same place,¹ the Exalted One addressed the brethren thus: “I am free, brethren, from all snares both human and celestial. You also, brethren, are free from all snares both human and celestial. Go forth, brethren, in a circuit for the good of many, for the happiness of many, out of love toward the world, for the advantage, the good, the happiness of gods and men. Let two not take the same course. Teach, brethren, the Norm that is beneficial in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. Reveal the holy life, entirely perfected and pure, both in spirit and form. There are, brethren, beings whose eyes are hardly dimmed by the dust of defilement. They perish because they do not hear the Norm. They will become such as know the Norm. I too, brethren, will go hence, even to the township of Sena in Uruvela.”

S 1.4.5

C1 Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere ... On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done.

Lk 9:1-6, 10

¹ In the Deer Park at Isipatana, near Benares.

48. The Companion

B1 “It is by living together with a person, sire,¹ that we learn of that person’s moral character; and then only after a long while, if we pay good attention and are not heedless, if we have insight and are not unintelligent.

“It is by having discussion with another, sire, that we learn whether that person is pure-minded, and then only after a long while, if we pay good attention and are not heedless, if we have insight and are not unintelligent.

“It is in time of trouble, sire, that we learn to know a man’s fortitude, and then only after a long while, if we pay good attention and are not heedless, if we have insight and are not unintelligent.

“It is by interacting with a person, sire, that we learn to know of his wisdom, and then only after a long while, if we pay good attention and are not heedless, if we have insight and are not unintelligent.

S 1.3.11

C1 “Truly I say to you, whoever does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Jn 10:1-5

¹ The Buddha is in Sāvatthi, capital of the kingdom of Kosala, and addresses King Pasenadi.

49. Parables of Accomplishment

B1 Do not discount the good
Thinking "It can't be mine."
Dripping water fills a pitcher, drop by drop
So the wise also is filled with good,
Little by little.

Dh 122

B2 If by leaving a small pleasure one sees a
greater pleasure, let a wise person leave the
small pleasure and look to the greater.

Dh 290

B3 "Consider, brethren, a farmer who gets his
field well-ploughed... puts in his seed... lets the
water in and turns it off carefully. Those are his
three critical duties. However, brethren, that
farmer has no magic power or authority to say,
'Let my crops spring up today, tomorrow let
them ear, and the day after let them ripen.' No, it
is precisely in due season that they do these
things.

"Even so, brethren, one has no such magic
power or authority as to say, 'Today let my mind
be free from impurities without grasping, or
tomorrow, or the day after.'"

A 3.10 (91)

B4 "Brethren, consider a slab of iron heated for a
long time.¹ When beaten,² a spark may leap off
and land on a nearby heap of straw or sticks,
may produce smoke, kindle a fire, and that fire
may consume the heap.³ From there, the fire
may spread to the surrounding vegetation, then
to the forest, until it finally comes to a barrier

(cont. next page)

C1 "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of
mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his
field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it
has grown it is the greatest of the shrubs and
becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come
and make nests in its branches."

Mt 13:31-32

C2 And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a
man should scatter seed upon the ground, and
should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed
should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The
earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the
ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the
grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle,
because the harvest has come."

Mt 4:26-29

C3 "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which
a woman took and hid in three measures of flour,
till all was leavened."

Mt: 13:33

C4 And he said, "The man is like a wise
fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew
it up from the sea full of small fish. Among them
the wise fisherman found a fine large fish. He
threw all the small fish back into the sea and
chose the large fish without difficulty. Whoever
has ears to hear, let him hear."

Th 8

¹ 'Heat' represents the desire of the disciple for
enlightenment. Desire generally has negative connotations
in Buddhism, but the specific striving for enlightenment is
a mark of the disciple's spiritual growth along the path.
Eventually (cf. the last paragraph of this citation) the
disciple will "cool" even this ardor, and will finally
abandon it after he has abandoned all his other desires.
This marks his attainment of complete liberation.

² The iron continually 'beaten' represents the discipline the
disciple undertakes to further himself along the path.

³ The spreading fire represents progress along the Way.

49. Parables of Accomplishment

such as water, rocky terrain, upland, a green cornfield, or moist country, and there it may die down through lack of fuel.¹

“Even so, brethren, a disciple thinks,² ‘If something does not exist, it cannot be “mine”; what will not become, that also will not be “mine”; and that which has become, that I abandon!’ So thinking, he acquires poise, does not yearn for existence, does not desire a life to come, but sees with true wisdom that there is a refuge beyond [existence], a peace.³

“Yet, the refuge is still not entirely realized by that disciple, his attachment toward the ego is not fully abandoned. His leaning towards worldly lusts is not completely discarded, his element of ignorance not totally done away with.

“Consider again, brethren, a disciple who thinks, ‘If something does not exist, it cannot be “mine”... He acquires poise... sees with true wisdom that there is a refuge beyond [existence], a peace. And the refuge is entirely realized by that disciple... his element of ignorance is totally done away with.⁴

“Destroying the bonds he enters and abides in unfettered liberation of the mind, in unfettered liberation by enlightenment here and now through his own insight. This, brethren, is called the coolness which is completely unattached.”⁵

A 7.6.2

C5 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

Mt: 13:44

C6 “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Mt 13:45-46

¹ The dying out of the fire represents the final cooling of desire and the attainment of nirvana.

² This paragraph represents an advanced though not final stage of insight. In the simile, it is analogous to the spark kindling the nearby heap of straw or the surrounding shrubs.

³ In this intermediate stage, the disciple ‘sees’ the refuge, but has not completely made it a reality in his own life.

⁴ This stage of ‘complete’ mastery is represented by the fire consuming the forest and all the surrounding region.

⁵ In the simile, this is the fire which finally dies down through lack of fuel. The root of the word *nirvana* (Pali: *nibbana*) refers to the extinguishing of fire, and is already known in the Vedic period. However the Buddhist usage refers to the extinguishing of fire not by wind, or blowing (an older connotation), but by other means, namely by the deprivation of the fuel of the defilements. (Cf. *upadhi* and PED 362.)

49. Parables of Accomplishment

B5 “Once, Prince, a certain clan moved away. And a man said to his fellow, ‘Let’s investigate that place [which was formerly inhabited]—perhaps we will come upon something valuable.’ ‘Very well, friend,’ the other assented. So, arriving at the abandoned village, they saw a heap of discarded hemp straw. One of the two said to the other, ‘Here’s a heap of straw. You make a bundle, and I’ll make a bundle, and then we’ll carry it away.’ The other consented, and they did so.

“Carrying this burden, they entered another village way. There they came upon a heap of discarded woven threads of hemp. One of the men said, ‘This pile of hempen threads is exactly what hempen straw is used for. So, friend, let’s discard our bundles of straw and carry away bundles of thread.’ But the other answered, ‘I’ve carried this load of straw this far, and it’s well secured—that’s good enough for me! You do as you please.’ So the first changed his straw for hempen threads.

“In like manner the two men came across a heap of discarded hempen cloths, a heap of flax, then linen threads, then linen cloths. In each place one fellow changed his burden for the better, while the other kept his straw. They came across heaps of cotton, cotton threads, and cotton cloths; then they came across iron, copper, tin, lead, silver, and finally gold. In the end one fellow carried a load of straw, while the other had a load of gold.

“They returned to their home village. Now, who do you suppose pleased the more? There, the fellow with the load of gold both gave and gained pleasure. But the one with a load of straw pleased neither his parents, nor his own family, nor his friends, and gained neither pleasure nor happiness.”¹

D 23.29

C7 “For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed. Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even that which he has will be taken away.’”

Mt 25:14-29

¹ In B5, C7, and other citations in this chapter, the underlying requirement is to *accomplish*—not merely to exist. “Being *without* merit is evil”—so relates King Asoka’s rock edict no. 10, an early witness to the *dhamma*. The same edict emphasizes the need for effort (cf. Chp. 7, 11, 54).

50. A Haven of Rest

B1 Brethren, imagine the intersection of four main roads in the pleasant countryside, and a great banyan tree providing a haven of rest for all the winged creatures round about. Even so, brethren, the believing disciple is a haven of rest for the many, for monks and nuns, for lay-disciples both male and female.

A 5.4.8

B2 Whether in town or forest, in valley or mountain, wherever the Noble Ones, those men of worth, make their dwelling— that place is ever the most appealing.

S 1.11.15

B3 “We householders, reverend Ananda, are pleasure-seekers, thrilled by pleasure, mesmerized by pleasure, pleasure-mad. Being so, your giving up of everything seems to us a huge calamity. Yet I’ve heard, that in this discipline of the Norm the heart of every young monk leaps up at this renunciation, becomes calm, steadfast and inclined thereto, and sees such giving up as the acquiring of peace. It is precisely here, reverend sir, that the difference lies between the monk engaged in the Noble Discipline and the many folk—I mean, in this giving up [that leads to peace].”

A 9.4.10

C1 And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade...”

Mk 4:30-32

C2 “Come to me, all you labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Mt 11:28-29

51. Spiritual Perception

B1 “Brethren, according as I desire, I know by mind the minds of other beings, of other persons. I recognize the passionate heart as passionate, the heart without passion as lacking passion; the hateful heart as hateful and the loving one as loving; I know the dull heart as dull and the alert heart as alert; the confused mind as confused, the tense mind, the lofty, the mean, the far-seeing mind—each one I know as it is. I recognize the mind whose vision is confined, the concentrated mind, the mind possessed by laziness, the mind bound, and the mind freed.”

S 2.16.9

B2 “Even so, Ananda, by mind recognizing mind, I know of some person, ‘There is good or evil in him’; and again, ‘The good has disappeared, the evil is uppermost, but the root of good is not cut off, and from that good will proceed. Thus is such a person bound not to fall in future.’ Truly, Ananda, by mind recognizing mind, the feelings and thoughts of man are known to the Enlightened One. By mind recognizing mind, the future arising of things is known to the Enlightened One.”

A 6.6.8

C1 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.

Jn 2:23-25

52. Let Your Light Shine

B1 Speak out, radiate Truth,
 Hoist the banner of seers!
Lest you fare completely unknown
Utter bright words ’mong the dull
Let wise words be your flag.
Opening your mouth men will know you
For you teach the deathless way.

A 4.5.8

C1 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Mt 5:14-16

B2 Those who know, they bring delight
 Noble Ones living the Norm
 They radiate Truth and make it shine
 True prophets of wisdom sublime.
Have you eyes to see? Are your passions gone?
 Then seek to understand
That prudent you'll live, fully knowing you'll see
 The end of birth, of all coming to be.

It 4.5

B3 On a pile of refuse by the road
On the rubbish a lily may grow
Sweetly-scented, unaffected
And all passers-by may know

 That amid humans rejected
Among trampled and coarse
The Buddha's disciple will appear
Outshining all, the brilliant seer.

Dh 58-59

B4 Perfume of flowers goes not against the wind
 Perfume of sandalwood, rosebay, nor jasmine
 But perfume of virtue travels against the wind
 And reaches the ends of the earth.
 Dh 54

53. With All One's Being

B1 A handful of kusa grass cuts the hand if improperly grasped; so also the life of discipleship leads to hell if improperly followed.

For no great fruit can proceed from acts of devotion carelessly performed, from sacred vows later broken, from the holy life that is impure.

Thus I say to you, when something must be done, let it be done with all your might. Do not raise dust on the road like a thoughtless pilgrim, for that dust is the dust of dangerous desires.

It's better to do nothing than to do it wrongly, for wrongdoing brings burning sorrow. Therefore do what is right, for good deeds never lead to pain.

Dh 311-314

B2 With all your heart, disciple, cross the stream and leave desires behind. Crossing the river of change¹ you will find Nirvana.

Dh 383

B3 Whether from the nobility, the Brahmin class, a laborer, or even from the Pariah class, whoever puts forth effort, whoever applies his entire strength, that one advances with indomitable stride— he attains supreme purity.

S 1.7.7

B4 “Strive tirelessly!”²

D 16.6.7

C1 “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Lk 9:62

C2 “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or, what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

“Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its taste how can its saltiness be restored? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they throw it away. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Lk 14:28-35

C3 “Be perfect therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Mt 5:48

¹ *saṃsāra*

² *Appamādena sampādettha*. These were the last words of the Buddha.

54. On Perfection

B1 On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying at Isipatana in the Deer Park. There he addressed the brethren, saying: “Brethren, once there was a rajah named Pacetana who commissioned the royal wheelwright thus: ‘Master wheelwright, six months from now there will be a battle. Can you make a pair of wheels for my chariot?’

‘I can, Lord.’

Now when six months less six days were passed, the wheelwright had only finished one wheel. Then the king said to him, ‘Master wheelwright, in six days there will be a battle. Is the new pair of wheels complete?’

‘Lord, one wheel is finished.’

‘But can you finish the second wheel in six days?’

‘I can, Lord.’

Well, brethren, in six days the wheelwright finished the second wheel and went to king Pacetana. On arriving, he said, ‘Here, Lord, the new pair of wheels are finished.’

‘Master wheelwright,’ said the king, ‘I see no difference between the wheel which it took you almost six months to finish, and the wheel you finished in six days.’

‘But there is a difference, Lord. Look!’

The wheelwright set rolling the wheel he had finished in six days. It kept rolling so long as the impulse that set it going lasted. When it’s forward motion ceased it circled ’round and ’round and fell to the ground.

Then the wheelwright set rolling the wheel he had finished in six months. It kept rolling so long as the impulse that set it going lasted. When its forward motion ceased it stood bolt upright, as if stuck to an axle.

‘But, master wheelwright,’ asked the rajah in wonderment, ‘why is there a difference in behavior between these two wheels?’

‘Lord,’ answered the wheelwright, ‘the rim of the wheel which I fashioned in six days
(*cont. next page*)

C1 “You therefore must be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Mt 5:48

C2 “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment, whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the fire of hell.”

Mt 5:21-22

C3 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Mt 5:27-28

54. On Perfection

[B1—cont.]

was full of faults and flaws, as were the spokes and the hub. But the rim of the wheel which I took almost six months to fashion is not crooked, but is faultless and without any flaw. So are its spokes and its hub. That is why, after it is set rolling, it keeps rolling so long as the impulse that set it going lasts, and when its forward motion ceases, it stands bolt upright, as if stuck to an axle.’

“Brethren, I am an Enlightened One, expert in the crooked ways of people, in their faults and flaws of action, of speech, and of thought. I teach that in whatever person, whether male or female, crookedness of action, of speech, and of thought is not abandoned, that person falls away from the Norm and Discipline like the wheel which was finished in six days. But in whatever person the crookedness of action, of speech, and of thought is abandoned, that person is firmly set in the Norm and Discipline, and is like the wheel fashioned in almost six months.

“So, brethren, train yourselves as follows: We will abandon crooked ways, the faults and flaws of action, of speech, and of thought. This is how you must train yourselves.”

A 3.2 (15)

B2 “Consider, Brahmin, some recluse or holy man who professes to live the holy life in all its perfection. He does not couple with womenfolk, does not enjoy being rubbed, massaged, bathed, shampooed by a woman, does not relish it, long for it, and is not entranced thereby; nor yet does he joke, jest, make merry with them. Though he does none of these, yet his eye burns for them, stares after them. This indeed, Brahmin, is a blemish, a tanishing, breaking, rending of the holy life. Such a man is said to live the holy life impurely, bound by the bond of sex. Nor is he freed from the griefs, ills, woes, and tribulations of birth, old age, and death. He is not freed from sorrow, I say.”

A 7.5.7

C4 “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Mt 5:17-20

55. The Passer-by

B1 “A man or a woman cannot take this body
and go away with it. Mortal existence,
brethren, is a transition of thought.”¹

A 10.21.9

B2 “Mogallana, a disciple has learned this: It is
of no benefit to be engrossed in the things of
this world.”

A 7.6.8

B3 “Then further, O king, the disciple, keeping
himself aloof from joy, becomes
imperturbable.² Mindful and self-possessed,
he experiences in his body that which the
perfected ones speak of when they say, ‘He
who is serene and self-possessed is well at
ease.’”

D 2.79

C1 Jesus said, “Become passers-by.”
Th 42

C2 Jesus, on whom be peace, said: “The world
is a bridge. Go over it, but do not build your
house upon it.”

— Inscription on the portal of the mosque
at Fatipur Sikri, India

¹ *citt’antaro*.

² *upekhako*. The PTS explains it as “literally, ‘looking on,’
that is, looking on rival mental states with equal mind.
Imperturbable, impartial, tolerant, unsusceptible, stoical,
composed, are all possible renderings, and all
unsatisfactory.” (D/1 p. 85). This passage is from the long
description of the adept’s odyssey to arahatship. Here, the
disciple reaches the third meditative plane (*jhana*).
Characteristic of this plane of meditation is ease but not
exuberance, awareness but not personal involvement,
mindfulness but not indifference.

56. The Truth Will Make You Free

B1 With good persons only consort
For knowledge of how they fashion their lives
May set us free from every ill.
S 1.4.1

C1 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”
Jn 8:31-32

B2 Neither husband nor child
 Though ever so dear
 Can free us from pain
 And ward off every fear
 As can hearing the all-blessed Norm.
 S 1.10.7

B3 The follower of the Awakened One
 Well understands desires,
 how they arise and how they cease.
 Self-controlled and aware,
 Yearnings' end he can clearly see
 He thirsts no more
 And is truly set free.

It 3.1.3

57. The Beneficial Teaching

B1 Brethren, I offer the Teaching
For the abandoning of the self
That defiling qualities may wane
And cleansing qualities grow,
That you who practice the Teaching
May here and now,
With direct insight
Enter upon and abide
In the fullness of understanding's perfection.

Brethren, this is no painful Way,
To suppose so would be far from truth.
In this Way you will find serenity,
Happiness and peace,
Mindfulness, full awareness,
And a glad abiding. D 9.40

B2 "Prince, if owing to your carelessness or
that of his nurse, your child were to put in his
mouth a piece of sharp pottery or glass, what
then would you do?"
"Why, I would immediately get it out, sir.
If I were not able to remove it quickly, I
would hold down the child's head with one
hand and remove the object with the other
hand, crooking a finger in his mouth, even if it
caused bleeding. You see, sir, I have much
love for this boy."

"Even so, Prince, an Enlightened One
knows words that are wholesome, true,
pleasing, acceptable, and beneficial to others.
He knows when to say them and how. Prince,
this is because an Enlightened One has much
love for living beings."

M 58.8

B3 The Buddha proclaims the Teaching
Beneficial in its beginning,
Beneficial in its development,
And beneficial in its ending.
In the spirit, and in the letter,
In all its fullness, and in all its purity,
He makes known the highest life.
D 3.2

C1 "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they
neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even
Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like
one of these. But if God so clothes the grass
which is alive in the field today and
tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much
more will he clothe you, O men of little faith!
And do not seek what you are to eat and what
you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. For
all the nations of the world seek these things;
and your Father knows that you need them.
Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things
shall be yours as well.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your
Father's good pleasure to give you the
kingdom."

Lk 12:27-32

C2 "Is there anyone among you who, if your
child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if
the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If
you then, who are evil, know how to give
good gifts to your children, how much more
will your Father in heaven give good things to
those who ask him!"

Mt 7:9-11

C3 "Take heed what you hear; the measure you
give will be the measure you get, and still
more will be given you. For to him who has
will more be given; and from him who has
not, even what he has will be taken away."

Mk 4:24-25

C4 "Judge not, and you will not be judged;
condemn not, and you will not be condemned;
forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it
will be given to you; good measure, pressed
down, shaken together, running over, will be
put into your lap."

Lk 6:37-38a

Appendix:
The Way

The first questions

- One asks with profound sincerity the deepest questions: Why am I alive? What is the purpose of life? What is the meaning of life?
- One senses in oneself the profound need to understand life, its purpose and meaning, and one's own purpose and meaning.
- One dedicates oneself to this deep need "to understand."

The dedication

In the quest for understanding, one summons all one's
willpower (effort)
concentration (focus)
and meditates on the first questions.

The first insights

As one becomes more focused and gains in concentration, one has the insight of the syzygy:
Everything has its opposite (up/down; tall/short; great/small; etc.). All abstractions and concepts
each have their opposite. This includes pleasure and its opposite, pain.

Therefore:

Insight: (a) It is impossible to escape pain without also renouncing (escaping) pleasure.

Insight: (b) The *concept* of pleasure is meaningless without the concept of pain. Also, the *experience* of pleasure is impossible without the experience of pain (though they are experienced at different times). People are deluded and seek pleasure in all its forms because they do not see the intimate connection between pleasure and pain.

Insight: (c) One realizes that seeking / "going after" pleasure is profitless, wasted effort, for pleasure is always accompanied by an equal amount of pain.

Insight: As one contemplates pleasure and pain, one realizes that humanity in general is preoccupied with seeking after pleasure in all its forms: sex, sensuality, excitement, wealth, immortality, reputation, power. One recognizes 'Pleasure' as the 'Prince of this World,' the primary motive guiding people's lives.

*Appendix:
The Way*

The two ways

- One recognizes ‘the two ways’ of life:
 - the way of “pleasure” (the way of the world, the wide way, the low road)
 - the way of “understanding” (the narrow way, the high road)

The choice

- One recognizes that these two ways are mutually exclusive. As an arrow cannot be aimed at two targets, so one cannot chose both pleasure and understanding. One must choose one or the other.

The decision

- Because one has recognized that pleasure is profitless and connected with pain [above (b)], and because one seeks an understanding of the First Questions, one chooses the way of understanding. This choice simultaneously entails a repudiation / leave-taking of the way of pleasure. As soon as this profound choice is made, one is certain that “understanding [enlightenment] will be mine.”

Growth on the new path

- One’s life is now founded irrevocably on a new path—the path of understanding. One has overcome deep-seated doubt, has gained assurance. One becomes gradually calmer, at peace, and more sure of oneself in the world. One’s vision clears, and one sees the world more and more as it is. One sees people going after all manner of pleasure, and justifying all manner of actions in that pursuit. One examines one’s heart and weeds out the empty, profitless pleasures one formerly cherished. One gains in understanding of the Buddha and of the Christ, and of all religion. As insight increases, fear based in ignorance decreases. As one stores up good karma, and gains in equanimity, one’s happiness increases. One acts and speaks mindfully, and one’s relations with others and with the world become harmless. One becomes a saint.

Arrival at the destination

- One eventually realizes that—like bread which has become completely leavened from a little yeast—one has arrived at the destination, one has accomplished what had to be done. One understands, and sees the way things are. This is liberation. With untarnished joy, perfect insight, and complete fulfillment, one enters Nirvana, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Index of Citations

The source of the citation is followed by the chapter(s) in these parallels where it occurs. A double slash separates citation from chapter number(s). For the Buddhist passages, citations from the Dīgha, Majjhima, and Samyutta Nikāyas follow the numbering in the Wisdom Publications. Other Buddhist scriptures follow the Pali Text Society numbering.

Buddhist citations

Dīgha Nikāya (D)	Samyutta Nikāya (S)	3.4.40 // 32	19 // 35
2.66 // 13	1.1.34 // 11	3.7.70 // 12, 16, 24	27 // 43
2.79 // 55	1.2.6 // 7	3.10 (91) // 49	39 // 43
2.99-100 // 40	1.2.17 // 11	4.1.5 // 42	50 // 36
3:2 // 57	1.2.26 // 9	4.1.6 // 19	51 // 31, 35
9.40 // 57	1.3.5 // 43	4.5.8 // 52	54 // 52
16.6.7 // 53	1.3.6 // 17	4.8.4 // 41	58-59 // 52
23.29 // 49	1.3.10 // 11	4.19.6 // 19	71 // 27
25.9-10 // 18	1.3.11 // 17, 29, 48	4.23.2 // 39	75 // 6, 16, 17
25.16 // 23	1.3.15 // 27	5.4.6 // 2	77 // 6
26.5 // 2	1.4.1 // 56	5.4.7 // 2, 27	85-86 // 7
27.9 // 34	1.4.2 // 2	5.4.8 // 50	91 // 15
29.22 // 13	1.4.3 // 2	5.6.6 // 43	92-93 // 10, 13
	1.4.5 // 47	5.6.7 // 27	100-102 // 45
Majjhima Nikāya (M)	1.4.17 // 8	5.17.2 // 3	103-105 // 12
	1.5.4 // 8	6.2.4 // 17	122 // 49
1.180 // 43	1.6.1 // 7	6.4.12 // 11, 18	125 // 27, 37
7.20 // 27	1.7.2 // 15, 41	6.5.12 // 37	129 // 27
13.10 // 16	1.7.5 // 41	6.6.8 // 51	130 // 24, 27
15.9 // 41	1.7.7 // 34, 45, 53	7.1.7 // 16	131-132 // 27
21:10 // 1, 41	1.7.9 // 29	7.5.7 // 54	133 // 27, 44
21.20 // 1	1.7.15 // 26	7.6.2 // 49	134 // 41
27.4 // 46	1.8.10 // 20	7.6.8 // 55	136-140 // 27, 37
27.12 // 15	1.10.7 // 15, 56	7.6.10 // 38	163 // 7
27.13 // 4, 23, 24, 25	1.11.4 // 41	7.7.8 // 18, 33	174 // 7
43, 44, 45	1.11.5 // 38	8.1.1 // 1	176 // 25
48.6 // 1, 3	1.11.15 // 50	8.1.10 // 29	178 // 16
58.3 // 46	2.16.9 // 51	8.4.4 // 30	181 // 11
58.8 // 57		9.4.7 // 8	197 // 1
82.22 // 17	Anguttara Nikāya (A)	9.4.10 // 50	200 // 14
82.41-42 // 16		10.7.9 // 44	219-220 // 27
86.18 // 40	1.2.4 // 1	10.21.9 // 1, 55	223 // 1, 41
98.11 (120) // 41	2.4.2 // 26		226 // 43
	2.7.1 // 15	Dhammapada (Dh)	231-234 // 38
	3.2 (15) // 54	3-5 // 1, 41	241 // 45
	3.2.16 // 43	9-10 // 29	252-253 // 36
		13-14 // 43	258 // 45
			263 // 18

Index of Citations

286-289 // 17	Udāna (Ud)	Sutta Nipāta (Sn)	761-2 // 5
290 // 49			769-770 // 17
293 // 43	2.1 // 11	60 // 15	806 // 17
306 // 25	2.6 // 14	92 // 6	830 // 27
309-310 // 22	2.8 // 5	117 // 21	832 // 41
311-314 // 53	3:8 // 18	119 // 21, 23	919 // 9
315 // 43	5.4 // 27	121 // 21	970 // 13
320-321 // 41	8.8 // 11, 14	122 // 21, 25	971-972 // 41
327 // 43	13.10 // 10	123 // 21, 22, 26	
345 // 15, 17	33.13 // 29	124 // 21, 26	Vinaya Mahavagga (Vm)
355 // 17		132 // 18	8.26 // 3
371 // 43	Itivuttaka (It)	143 // 41	
379 // 43		149 // 1	Theragatha (ThG)
383 // 53	1.2.9 // 4	242 // 28	879 // 41
393 // 34	2.1.4-5 // 35	243 // 28	
394 // 29	2.2.11 // 29	244 // 28	Udanavarga (Uv)
396 // 14	3.1.3 // 56	245 // 28	
399 // 41, 42	3.4.1 // 17	246 // 28	1. 20-22 // 16, 17
405 // 24	3.4.10 // 37	247 // 28	9.8 // 27, 31
407 // 38	3.5.2 // 15	274 // 15	29.11-12 // 29
408 // 38, 44	3.5.3 // 29	339 // 13	32.1 // 13
409 // 23	3.5.9 // 8	393 // 21, 24	33.13 // 29
415 // 15, 42	4.1 // 6	394 // 21	33.45 // 24
420 // 10	4.2 // 13	395 // 21, 23	33.46 // 41
421 // 11	4.5 // 52	396 // 21, 22	
	4.7 // 26	397 // 21, 25	Chinese Dhp (DhC)
		480-481 // 35, 45	222 // 16
		657 // 38	
		666 // 27	
		755 // 5	

Christian citations

Gospel of John (Jn)	10:1-5 // 48	6:24-26 // 27	9:58 // 15, 42
	13:34-35 // 1	6:27-36 // 1	9:62 // 53
1:9-11 // 42	15:12-13 // 1	6:30 // 41	10:4-9 // 15
2:23-25 // 51	15:14-15 // 34	6:37-38 // 27, 57	10:30-37 // 1, 3
3:5-7 // 6	18:36 // 8	6:41-42 // 36	11:43-44 // 39
3:7-8 // 10		6:43-45 // 31	11:53-54 // 46
4:24 // 8, 9, 10	Gospel of Luke (Lk)	6:46-49 // 35	12:2-3 // 32
6:63 // 8, 9, 10		9:1-6, 10 // 47	12:15 // 17
8:4-5, 7 // 36		9:3 // 13	12:16-21 // 16, 17
8:23b // 10	6:12 // 43	9:23-24 // 42	12:22-23 // 15
8:31-32 // 56	6:24 // 17	9:57-62 // 7	12:27-32 // 57

Index of Citations

12:33-34 // 11, 17
 12:35-40 // 43
 14:7-11 // 41
 14:11 // 27
 14:26-30 // 7
 14:28-35 // 53
 14:33 // 11
 15:11-24 // 40
 16:13 // 5, 6, 8
 16:14-15 // 5, 8
 16:15 // 29
 16:19-31 // 17, 27
 17:20b-21 // 8, 9, 10
 18:9-14 // 40, 41
 18:18-20 // 21
 18:18-25 // 2, 14
 18:20 // 22
 18:22b // 17
 18:24-25 // 17
 18:22 // 16
 18:28-30 // 15
 21:34-36 // 43
 22:24-27 // 3

**Gospel of Mark
(Mk)**

2:38-40 // 18
 3:11 // 1
 3:24-25 // 6
 4:24-25 // 57
 4:30-32 // 50
 6:19-20 // 16
 7:14-23 // 28
 7:20-23 // 31
 8:22 // 39
 8:34b-37 // 8, 11, 12
 8:36-37 // 16

9:35 // 3, 41
 9:42 // 27, 37
 9:43-48 // 11, 33
 10:24b-25 // 7, 11
 10:33-34 // 42
 10:43-44 // 41
 11:27-33 // 46
 12:13-17 // 46
 12:17 // 8
 12:28-34 // 1
 12:41-44 // 2
 13:33-37 // 43
 14:37-38 // 43

**Gospel of Matthew
(Mt)**

4:26-29 // 49
 5:3-12 // 5, 27
 5:5 // 41
 5:9 // 4
 5:10-11 // 41
 5:14-16 // 52
 5:17-20 // 54
 5:18-19 // 27
 5:20 // 19
 5:21-22 // 38, 44, 54
 5:27-28 // 22, 54
 5:33-36 // 44
 5:37 // 45
 5:38-42 // 41
 5:44-45 // 20
 5:48 // 53, 54
 6:1-4 // 2
 6:1-6 // 18
 6:7 // 45
 6:12, 14-15 // 27

6:24 // 17
 6:25-33 // 13
 7:5-7 // 19
 7:9-11 // 57
 7:12 // 1, 27
 7:13-14 // 7
 7:15-16 // 29
 7:21 // 35
 9:13 // 1, 29
 10:9-10 // 13
 10:37-39 // 11, 15
 10:41-42 // 27
 11:7-9 // 42
 11:19b // 35
 11:28-29 // 50
 11:29 // 41
 12:1 // 15
 12:30 // 6
 12:33-37 // 44
 12:36-37 // 27
 12:46-50 // 34
 13:3-9, 18-23 // 30
 13:31-32 // 49
 13:33 // 49
 13:44 // 49
 13:45-46 // 49
 15:8-9 // 45
 15:19-20 // 21, 29
 18:4 // 41
 19:17 // 21
 19:18 // 23, 24, 25
 19:19 // 1, 26
 19:21 // 11
 19:29 // 16
 19:29-30 // 11, 17
 21:17-18 // 15
 21:28-31 // 35
 22:14 // 7

23:2-3 // 19
 23:2-4 // 35
 23:12 // 18
 23:23-28 // 29
 23:25 // 18
 25:14-29 // 49
 25:34-36 // 1
 26:37-38 // 43
 26:52 // 24
 27:12-14 // 41

**Gospel of Thomas
(Th)**

6b // 32
 8 // 49
 25 // 1
 42 // 55
 54 // 11, 14
 106 // 4

**Other Christian
sources**

Papyrus
 Oxyrhynchus
 840 // 29

1Cor 7:8-9 // 22

1 Peter 5:8 // 43

Inscription on the
 portal of the mosque
 at Fatipur Sikri, India
 // 55