

法句經

(Faju Jing)

Sutra of the Teaching Verses,
also known as
The Dhammapada

Colofon

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The Dhammapada

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Clark Gillian Van Herrewege

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Foreword

The sutra you are about to read, the Faju Jing (Sutra of the Teaching Verses, also known as the Dhammapada), is one of the most fundamental and oldest Buddhist scriptures translated into Chinese and serves as a window into the core of the Buddha's teachings. This collection of verses has a fascinating history that bridges ancient India and China, as well as the various major streams within Buddhism.

The compilation of these verses is attributed to the Venerable Dharmatrāta (法救, Faju), a respected master from the Sarvāstivāda school. This was one of the most important Early Buddhist Schools in India, which formed the basis for what would later become Theravāda Buddhism. Dharmatrāta's goal was to make the essence of the Dharma—the teachings on impermanence, karma, and the path to liberation—accessible.

The journey of this text to China was a monumental undertaking. Around the year 224 AD, the work was translated by a team led by Vighna (維祇難, Wéiqínán), an Indian monk. In the Chinese Kingdom of Wu, he and his fellow translators tackled the complex puzzle of conveying deep Buddhist concepts into the Chinese language and culture. Their pioneering work gave the Chinese one of their first, clear insights into the teachings of the Buddha.

What makes this text particularly fascinating is its unique position within Buddhism. The Faju Jing is rooted in the tradition of the Early Schools, where the emphasis lies on personal liberation and the ideal of the arhat (the enlightened saint). We still see this focus today in Theravāda Buddhism, as practiced in Thailand and Sri Lanka. In the later Mahāyāna traditions, such as the Zen Buddhism that became dominant in China and Japan, the focus shifted to other texts that centered on the ideal of the bodhisattva (one who seeks enlightenment for all beings).

Yet, the Faju Jing was never forgotten. The reason for this is simple but crucial: Mahāyāna Buddhism builds upon the foundation of the early teachings. Concepts like impermanence and karma are the absolute basis for every Buddhist path. The Faju Jing was therefore always valued as an authentic source of the Buddha's words—a practical and direct guide full of wisdom. It was the gateway through which many first entered Buddhism.

You are therefore holding a timeless treasure in your hands. The verses in this first chapter, 'Impermanence', bring us immediately to the heart of

Buddhist realization. They form the first step on a path of profound insight that has inspired countless seekers throughout the centuries.

Below you will find the introduction to the work by the translator Zhi Qian (3rd century AD) in his own words:

法句經序

(Prologue to the Sutra of the Teaching Verses)

The "Tánbō Jì" (Dhammapada verses) contains the essential meaning of many sutras. "Tán" (Dham-) means "Dharma" (Teaching, Law); "bō" (-pada) means "verse" or "sentence". There are several versions of the Dharmapada Sutra: one with nine hundred verses, one with seven hundred, and one with five hundred. A "jì" (verse) is a concise statement, comparable to a poem or an ode. The Buddha spoke these verses in response to specific events; they were not all spoken at one time. Each verse has its own origin and context, scattered throughout the various sutras. The Buddha, all-knowing and by nature great and benevolent, had compassion for the world and appeared to reveal the meaning of the Way and to liberate people. From the twelve categories of scriptures, the most important points were summarized in separate collections.

The four Āgamas were transmitted by Ānanda after the passing of the Buddha. Regardless of the length of the scroll, they all begin with the words: "Thus have I heard, at a certain place..." where the Buddha was and expounded his teaching. Later, monks from the five schools copied verses of four or six sentences from the many sutras. They arranged these according to meaning and divided them thematically into chapters ('pin'). There was no part of the twelve categories of scriptures that they did not carefully consider. Because there was no specific overarching title, it was called "Faju" (Teaching Verses). The sutras are the "words of the teaching" (fā yán): "Faju" is what comes from those words of the teaching.

Recently, Mr. Gě transmitted a version of seven hundred verses. The meaning of the verses is profound, but the translation of it has made it somewhat murky. It is rare to meet a Buddha and to hear his words. Moreover, all Buddhas appear in India (Tianzhu), and the language of India differs greatly from Chinese. It is said that their script is a 'heavenly script' and their language a 'heavenly language'. The names and concepts

are different, which makes a faithful translation very difficult. Only the masters of yore, such as (...) An Shigao (...) and Fótiao, who translated Sanskrit into Chinese, truly managed to capture the essence. It is difficult to follow them. Although later translators could not be as precise, they still valued the treasure of the teaching and managed to convey the general meaning.

To begin with, there was Vighna, who came from India and traveled to Wuchang in the third year of the Huangwu period (224 AD). I (your servant, Zhi Qian) received from him the version with five hundred verses. I requested his travel companion, Zhu Jiangyan, to translate it. Although Jiangyan was proficient in Sanskrit, his knowledge of (literary) Chinese was not complete. The words he conveyed were sometimes literal Sanskrit, sometimes a phonetic rendering of the meaning. The resulting text was therefore very direct and simple, and initially, I was ashamed that the phrasing was not elegant. Vighna then said: "The Buddha has said: 'Rely on the meaning, not the embellishment. Take the teaching, not the literary ornamentation.' Whoever transmits the sutras must ensure they are easy to understand without losing the meaning. That is the right way." All who were present agreed and said: "Laozi stated that 'beautiful words are not trustworthy, and trustworthy words are not beautiful.' And Confucius said: 'The written word cannot fully express speech, and speech cannot fully express intent.' This shows that the intent of the sages is deep and limitless. In conveying the Sanskrit meaning, it is indeed appropriate to be direct." Therefore, after receiving the verses orally from the translator, we adhered to the original meaning without adding literary embellishments. What the translator did not understand, we left open and did not transmit. That is why there are omissions and not everything is included.

Nevertheless, though the wording is simple, the meaning is deep. The text is concise, but its meaning is broad, and its content is a summary of many sutras, with core verses and explanations. In India, it is said of a beginning student who does not study the Dharmapada that he is skipping a step. This is the great, gradual gate for the beginner and the deep treasury for the advanced. It can enlighten the ignorant, remove doubt, and inspire people to stand on their own feet. The effort of study is small, but what it encompasses is broad. It can truly be called the 'wondrous essence'! When this was transmitted, there were

matters we did not understand. When Zhu Jiangyan returned, we consulted him again about these verses. We received another thirteen chapters. We compared these with old versions and made some additions and corrections. We arranged the chapters and merged them into one work of thirty-nine chapters, with a total of seven hundred and fifty-two verses. Hopefully, this will be of use and lead to a wide dissemination of the teaching.

無常品第一

Chapter One:

Impermanence

無常品者。寤欲昏亂。榮命難保。唯道是真

Wúcháng pín zhě. Wù yù hūn luàn. Róng mìng nán bǎo. Wéi dào shì zhēn.

(L: Impermanence / chapter / that which... / to awaken / desire / dark / confused. / Glory / life / difficult / to preserve. / Only / the Way / is / true.)

"This chapter on impermanence teaches that one must awaken from the dark confusion of desire. Glory and life are difficult to preserve; only the Way is true."

睡眠解寤。宜歡喜思。聽我所說。撰記佛言。

Shuìmian jiě wù. Yí huānxī sī. Tīng wǒ suǒ shuō. Zhuànjì Fó yán.

(L: Sleep / to free / to awaken. / Should / joyful / contemplate. / Listen / I / what / speak. / Composed-recorded / Buddha / words.)

"When you awaken from sleep, contemplate this with joy. Listen to what I speak: the recorded words of the Buddha."

所行非常。謂興衰法。夫生者死。此滅為樂。

Suǒ xíng fēicháng. Wèi xīng shuāi fǎ. Fū shēng zhě sǐ. Cǐ miè wéi lè.

(L: What / arises / is not-permanent. / Called / rise / and fall / phenomenon. / Whoever / is born / will surely / die. / This / extinguishing / is / happiness.)

"All that arises is impermanent; this is the law of rise and fall. Whoever is born will surely die. The cessation of all this is true happiness."

譬如陶家。埴埴作器。一切要壞。人命亦然。

Pí rú táo jiā. Shān zhí zuò qì. Yīqiè yào huài. Rén mìng yì rán.

(L: For example / potter / family. / Kneading / clay / making / object. / Everything / will surely / break. / Human / life / also / thus.)

"Like a potter who kneads clay to make a pot: everything will eventually break. So it is with human life."

如河駛流。往而不返。人命如是。逝者不還。

Rú hé shǐ liú. Wǎng ér bù fǎn. Rén mìng rúshì. Shì zhě bù huán.

(L: Like / a river / swiftly / flows. / Goes / and / not / returns. / Human / life / is like this. / What passes / does not / return.)

"Like a river that flows swiftly, forward and without return. Such is human life; what passes, never returns."

譬人操杖。行牧食牛。老死猶然。亦養命去。

Pì rén cāo zhàng. Xíng mù shí niú. Lǎo sǐ yóu rán. Yì yǎng mìng qù.

(L: For example / a person / wields / a staff. / Walks / herding / grazing / oxen. / Old age / death / still / so. / Also / nourishes / life / and disappears.)

"As a herdsman with his staff leads the oxen to pasture, so old age and death drive life onward, little by little taking what it feeds."

千百非一。族姓男女。貯聚財產。無不衰喪。

Qiān bǎi fēi yī. Zú xìng nán nǚ. Zhù jù cáichǎn. Wú bù shuāi sàng.

(L: Thousand / hundred / not / one. / Family / name / men / women. / Storing / gathering / wealth / property. / Nothing / that does not / decay / and is lost.)

"Whether thousands or hundreds, families of every name, man or woman: though they gather much wealth and property, there is nothing that does not decay and become lost."

生者日夜。命自攻削。壽之消盡。如露枯水。

Shēng zhě rì yè. Mìng zì gōng xuē. Shòu zhī xiāo jìn. Rú lù kū shuǐ.

(L: The living / day / and night. / Life / itself / attacks / and scrapes off. / Lifespan / its / disappearing / ending. / Like / dripping / dried up / water.)

"Day and night, the life of the living is scraped away by itself. The lifespan is depleted, like a stream of water drying up."

常者皆盡。高者亦墮。合會有離。生者有死。

Cháng zhě jiē jìn. Gāo zhě yì duò. Hé huì yǒu lí. Shēng zhě yǒu sǐ.

(L: Enduring / things / all / end. / High / things / also / fall. / Meeting / has / parting. / Living / beings / have / death.)

"All that seems steadfast will end; all that is high will fall. Where there is a meeting, there will be a parting; where there is life, death will follow."

衆生相剋。以喪其命。隨行所墮。自受殃福。

Zhòngshēng xiāng kè. Yǐ sàng qí mìng. Suí xíng suǒ duò. Zì shòu yāng fú.

(L: Living beings / each other / overcome. / Thereby / losing / their / life. / According to / deeds / where one falls. / Self / receives / calamity / and happiness.)

"Living beings compete with each other and thus bring loss upon their lives. According to their deeds they fall, and they themselves receive the consequences, whether it be calamity or happiness."

老見苦痛。死則意去。樂家縛獄。貪世不斷。

Lǎo jiàn kǔ tòng. Sǐ zé yì qù. Lè jiā fù yù. Tān shì bù duàn.

(L: Old / sees / suffering / pain. / Death / then / consciousness / departs. / Pleasure / in home / is a binding / prison. / Greed / for the world / not / stops.)

"In old age one experiences suffering and pain; at death the consciousness departs. To delight in the home is like a prison that binds you; the greed for the world does not cease."

咄嗟老至。色變作耄。少時如意。老見蹈藉。

Duōjiē lǎo zhì. Sè biàn zuò mào. Shǎo shí rúyì. Lǎo jiàn dǎo jí.

(L: In a sigh / old age / arrives. / Appearance / changes / becomes / an old person. / Young / time / according to one's wish. / Old / sees / trampled / and despised.)

"In the blink of an eye, old age is here. The appearance changes and one becomes old. In youth, everything goes as wished, but in old age, one is trampled and despised."

雖壽百歲。亦死過去。爲老所厭。病條至際。

Suī shòu bǎi suì. Yì sǐ guòqù. Wéi lǎo suǒ yàn. Bìng tiáo zhì jì.

(L: Although / living / a hundred / years. / Also / dies / and passes away. / By / old age / one becomes / loathed. / Sick / branches / reach / the limit.)

"Even if one lives a hundred years, one also passes away in death. One is tormented by old age, and the branches of sickness reach to the very end."

是日已過。命則隨滅。如少水魚。斯有何樂。

Shì rì yǐ guò. Mìng zé suí jiē. Rú shǎo shuǐ yú. Sī yǒu hé lè.

(L: This / day / already / past. / Life / thus / follows / reduction. / Like / little / water / fish. / In this / is / what / pleasure?)

"Another day has passed and life is accordingly reduced. Like a fish in ever-dwindling water, what pleasure can be found in this?"

老則色衰。所病自壞。形敗腐朽。命終自然。

Lǎo zé sè shuāi. Suǒ bìng zì huài. Xíng bài fǔxiū. Mìngzhōng zìrán.

(L: Old / then / appearance / decays. / What / is sick / self / destroys. / Form / decays / rots / and decomposes. / Life's end / is natural.)

"When one is old, beauty decays. Sickness destroys the body from within. The form decays, rots, and decomposes; the end of life is inevitable."

是身何用。恒漏臭處。為病所困。有老死患。

Shì shēn hé yòng. Héng lòu chòu chù. Wéi bìng suǒ kùn. Yǒu lǎo sǐ huàn.

(L: This / body / what / use? / Constantly / leaking / smelly / places. / By / sickness / one is / tormented. / Has / old age / death / suffering.)

"What is the use of this body? It constantly leaks impurity. It is tormented by sickness and carries the suffering of old age and death."

嗜欲自恣。非法是增。不見聞變。壽命無常。

Shìyù zì zì. Fēifǎ shì zēng. Bùjiàn wén biàn. Shòumìng wúcháng.

(L: Craving / at one's own / discretion. / Unwholesome doctrine / this / increases. / Not seeing / hearing / change. / Lifespan / impermanent.)

"One indulges in craving, and thus what is unwholesome increases. One does not see or hear the changes and forgets that life is impermanent."

非有子恃。亦非父兄。為死所迫。無親可怙。

Fēi yǒu zǐ shì. Yì fēi fù xiōng. Wéi sǐ suǒ pò. Wú qīn kě hù.

(L: Not / have / son / to rely on. / Also / not / father / or older brother. / By / death / one is / hunted. / No / relative / can / protect.)

"You cannot rely on your sons, nor on your father or brothers. When death hunts you down, there is no relative who can protect you."

晝夜慢惰。老不止淫。有財不施。不受佛言。有此四弊。為自侵欺。

Zhòuyè màn duò. Lǎo bùzhǐ yín. Yǒu cái bù shī. Bù shòu Fó yán. Yǒu cì sì bì. Wéi zì qīn qī.

(L: Day and night / arrogant / and lazy. / Old / not stopping / debauchery. / Has / wealth / not / giving. / Not / receiving / Buddha / words. / Has / these / four / ills. / Is / oneself / harming / and deceiving.)

"Being arrogant and lazy, day and night; not ceasing from debauchery in old age; possessing wealth but not being generous; not accepting the

words of the Buddha. Whoever has these four ills, harms and deceives themselves."

非空非海中。非入山石間。無有地方所。脫之不受死。

Fēi kōng fēi hǎi zhōng. Fēi rù shān shí jiān. Wú yǒu dìfāng suǒ. Tuō zhī bù shòu sǐ.

(L: Not / in the sky / not / in the sea. / Not / entering / mountain / rock / between. / Not / is there / a place / or spot. / To escape / it / and not / receive / death.)

"Not in the sky, not in the middle of the sea, and not by hiding between the rocks in the mountains; there is no place on earth where you can escape death."

是務是吾作。當作令致是。人爲此燒擾。履踐老死憂。

Shì wù shì wú zuò. Dāng zuò lìng zhì shì. Rén wéi cǐ shāo rǎo. Lǚ jiàn lǎo sǐ yōu.

(L: This / must / this / I / do. / Will / do / to achieve / this. / People / by / this / are disturbed. / Treading / old age / death / sorrows.)

"This I must do, and that I will do to achieve this or that. Through such thoughts people are disturbed, and thus they tread the path of sorrow, old age, and death."

知此能自淨。如是見生盡。比丘厭魔兵。從生死得度。

Zhī cǐ néng zì jìng. Rúshì jiàn shēng jìn. Bīqiū yàn móluó bīng. Cóng shēngsǐ dé dù.

(L: Knowing / this / can / self / purify. / Thus / seeing / birth's / end. / The monk / loathes / Mara's / army. / From / birth-and-death / obtains / liberation.)

"Who knows this, can purify themselves. By seeing this, one sees the end of becoming. The monk who repels the army of Māra thus obtains liberation from life and death."

教學品第二

Chapter Two:

Teaching and Learning

教學品者。導以所行。釋己愚闇得見道明。

Jiàoxué pīn zhě. Dǎo yǐ suǒ xíng. Shì jǐ yú àn dé jiàn dào míng.

(L: Teach-learn / chapter / that which... / To guide / with / what / to practice. / To liberate / one's own / folly / darkness / to obtain / seeing / the Way's / clarity.)

"This chapter on teaching and learning is a guide to the right practice. It liberates us from our own folly and darkness, so that we may see the clarity of the Way."

咄哉何爲寐。蜃螺蚌蠹類。隱弊以不淨。迷惑計爲身。

Duō zāi hé wéi mèi. Yú luó bàng dù lèi. Yǐn bì yǐ bù jìng. Míhuò jì wéi shēn.

(L: Alas! / why / sleep? / Insect / snail / mussel / worm / kind. / Hidden / covered / with / impurity. / Confused / considers / as / body.)

"O, why do you sleep, you who are like a shell or worm-like creature, hidden and covered with impurity? Confused, you consider this your true self. "

焉有被斫創。心如嬰疾痛。邁于衆厄難。而反爲用眠。

Yān yǒu bèi zhuó chuāng. Xīn rú yīng jí tòng. Gòu yú zhòng è nán. Ēr fǎn wéi yòng mián.

(L: How can one / who has received / hack / wounds, / heart / like / a baby's / sickness / pain, / encountering / a multitude / of calamities / and difficulties, / and / conversely / still / sleep?)

"How can someone who is battered by wounds, whose heart aches like a sick child, and who endures a multitude of calamities and difficulties, nevertheless surrender to sleep?

思而不放逸。爲仁學仁迹。從是無有憂。常念自滅意。

Sī ér bù fàngyì. Wéi rén xué rén jì. Cóng shì wú yǒu yōu. Cháng niàn zì miè yì.

(L: Think / and / do not / be negligent. / Be / benevolent / learn / benevolent / traces. / From this / follows / not having / worries. / Constantly / be mindful / of self / extinguishing / thoughts.)

"Think and be not negligent. Be benevolent and learn to follow the traces of benevolence. From this follows a life without worries. Be constantly mindful to extinguish the ego-thoughts. "

正見學務增。是爲世間明。所生福千倍。終不墮惡道。

Zhèngjiàn xué wù zēng. Shì wéi shìjiān míng. Suǒ shēng fú qiān bèi. Zhōng bù duò è dào.

(L: Right view / learning / diligently / to increase. / This / is / for the world / a light. / What it brings forth / merit / a thousand / times. / Ultimately / not / falling / into evil / paths.)

"Whoever increases right view through diligent learning is a light for the world. The merit that arises from this is a thousandfold; one will ultimately not fall into evil paths."

莫學小道。以信邪見。莫習放蕩。令增欲意。

Mò xué xiǎo dào. Yǐ xìn xié jiàn. Mò xí fàngàng. Lìng zēng yù yì.

(L: Do not / learn / small / paths. / Thereby / believing / wrong / views. / Do not / make a habit of / debauchery. / So that / you increase / desirous / thoughts.)

"Do not tread insignificant paths and do not believe in wrong views. Do not make a habit of debauchery, for that only increases thoughts of desire."

善修法行。學誦莫犯。行道無憂。世世常安。

Shàn xiū fǎ xíng. Xué sòng mò fàn. Xíng dào wú yōu. Shì shì cháng ān.

(L: Well / practice / the Dharma / practice. / Learn / and recite / do not / transgress. / Practicing / the Way / without / worries. / Life after life / constantly / at peace.)

"Practice the Dharma well. Learn and recite the teaching without transgressing it. Whoever walks the Way thus is without worries and will be at peace, life after life."

學攝身。常慎思言。是到不死。行滅得安。

Mǔn xué shè shēn. Cháng shèn sī yán. Shì dào bù sǐ. Xíng miè dé ān.

(L: Diligently / learn / to control / the body. / Constantly / carefully / consider / speech. / This / reaches / the deathless. / The practice / of extinction / obtains / peace.)

"Diligently learn to control the body and always be careful with your speech. This is the way to the Deathless (Nirvana). Through the practice of extinction, one obtains peace."

非務勿學。是務宜行。已知可念。則漏得滅。

Fēi wù wù xué. Shì wù yí xíng. Yǒu zhī kě niàn. Zé lǒu dé miè.

(L: Non-essential / matters / do not / learn. / Essential / matters / one should / practice. / Already knowing / one can / be mindful. / Then / the defilements / obtain / extinction.)

"Do not study matters that are not essential. 44 What is essential, one should practice. By knowing and being mindful of this, the mental defilements can be extinguished."

見法利身。夫到善方。知利健行。是謂賢明

Jiàn lì shēn. Fū dào shàn fāng. Zhī lì jiàn xíng. Shì wèi xián míng.

(L: Seeing / the Dharma / is beneficial / for the self. / Who reaches / the good / direction. / Knowing / the benefit / vigorously / practices. / This / is called / wise / and enlightened.)

"To see the Dharma is beneficial for oneself. Whoever has found the right direction and knows its benefit, practices it vigorously. That is what is called wise and enlightened."

起覺義者。學滅以固。着滅自恣。損而不興。是向以強。是學得中。從是解義宜憶念行。

Qǐ jué yì zhě. Xué miè yǐ gù. Zhuó miè zì zì. Sùn ér bù xīng. Shì xiàng yǐ qiáng. Shì xué dé zhōng. Cóng shì jiě yì. Yí yìniàn xíng.

(L: Rising / to awaken / to the meaning / the one who... / Learns / extinction / in order to / strengthen. / Clinging / to extinction / at one's own / discretion. / Harms / and / does not / promote. / This / direction / is with / strength. / This / learning / obtains / the middle. / From this / understanding / the meaning. / One should / remember / and practice.)

"Whoever awakens to the meaning of the teaching, studies extinction to strengthen his path. But whoever clings to the idea of extinction at his own discretion, harms himself and makes no progress. Direct yourself to the teaching with strength and find the middle way. Whoever understands the meaning from this point should remember it and act accordingly."

學先斷母。率君二臣。廢諸營從。是上道人。

Xué xiān duàn mǔ. Shuài jūn èr chén. Fèi zhū yíng cóng. Shì shàng dào rén.

(L: To learn / first / to cut off / the mother. / Together with / the king / and two / ministers. / To abolish / all / the army camp / followers. / Is / the highest / path / person.)

"The disciple first cuts off the 'mother' (craving), and the 'king' (the delusion of self) with his 'two ministers' (the extreme views of eternalism and annihilationism). Whoever abolishes all their 'followers' (the remaining defilements) is a person of the highest path."

學無朋類。不得善友。寧獨守善。不與愚偕。

Xué wú péng lèi. Bù dé shàn yǒu. Níng dú shǒu shàn. Bù yǔ yú xié.

(L: Learning / without / friends / or kind. / Not obtaining / a good / friend. / Rather / alone / guard / the good. / Not / with / the fool / associate.)

"If you cannot find companions or good friends during your study, it is better to guard the good alone. Do not associate with a fool. "

樂戒學行。奚用伴為。獨善無憂。如空野象。

Lè jiè xué xíng. Xī yòng bàn wéi. Dú shàn wú yōu. Rú kōng yě xiàng.

(L: Joy / in ethics / learning / and practice. / What for / serves / a companion? / Alone / doing good / without / worries. / Like / an empty / wilderness / elephant.)

"Find joy in ethics and the practice of the teaching. 72 What use is a companion? Whoever does good alone is without worries, like a wild elephant in the emptiness of the wilderness."

戒聞俱善。二者敦賢。方戒稱聞。宜諦學行。

Jiè wén jù shàn. Èr zhě dūn xián. Fāng jiè chēng wén. Yí dì xué xíng.

(L: Ethics / and the heard / both / are good. / Of the two / which / is wiser? / Compared to / ethics / one praises / the heard. / One should / truly / learn / and practice.)

"Both ethical discipline (śīla) and hearing the teaching (śruta) are good. But which of the two is wiser? Although discipline is the foundation, the hearing of the teaching is praised. One must truly study and practice the teaching. "

學先護戒。開閉必固。施而無受。仿行勿臥。

Xué xiān hù jiè. Kāi bì bì gù. Shī ér wú shòu. Lè xíng wù wò.

(L: Learning / first / guard / ethics. / Opening / and closing / must be / firm. / Giving / and / without / receiving. / Strenuously / practicing / not / resting.)

"When learning, first guard your ethical discipline. The opening and closing (of the sense doors) must be steadfast. Give without expecting anything in return. Practice with effort and do not rest on your laurels."

若人壽百歲。邪學志不善。不如生一日。精進受正法。

Ruò rén shòu bǎi suì. Xié xué zhì bù shàn. Bùrú shēng yī rì. Jīngjìn shòu zhèng 正。

(L: If / a person / lives / a hundred / years. / With wrong / learning / and intention / not / good. / Not as good as / living / one / day. / Diligently / receiving / the right / Dharma.)

"Even if a person lives a hundred years, full of wrong teachings and unwholesome intentions, it cannot compare to living a single day on which one diligently receives the true Dharma."

若人壽百歲。奉火修異術。不如須臾頃。事戒者福稱。

Ruò rén shòu bǎi suì. Fèng huǒ xiū yì shù. Bùrú xūyú qīng. Shì jiè zhě fú chēng.

(L: If / a person / lives / a hundred / years. / Fire / offering / and practicing / strange / arts. / Not as good as / a moment / short. / Serving / the ethical / person / whose merit / is praised.)

"Even if a person lives a hundred years, making fire offerings and practicing strange rituals, it cannot compare to the merit that is praised by paying respect for just a moment to someone who upholds the ethical precepts. "

能行說之可。不能勿空語。虛偽無誠信。智者所屏棄。

Néng xíng shuō zhī kě. Bùnéng wù kōng yǔ. Xūwèi wú chéngxìn. Zhìzhě suǒ bīngqì.

(L: To be able / to practice / what one speaks of / is good. / Not being able / do not / use empty / words. / False / and hypocritical / without / sincerity / or trust. / The wise / by them / are rejected.)

"If you can act on what you say, it is good to speak of it. If you cannot, do not speak empty words. The wise reject all who are false and hypocritical, without sincerity or trustworthiness. "

學當先求解。觀察別是非。受諦應誨彼。慧然不復惑。

Xué dāng xiān qiú jiě. Guānchá bié shì fēi. Shòu dì yīng huì bǐ. Huì rán bù fù huò.

(L: Learning / one must / first / seek / understanding. / Observe / and distinguish / right / and wrong. / Having received / the truth / one should / teach / others. / Enlightened / then / not / again / be confused.)

"Whoever learns must first seek understanding. Observe and distinguish what is right from what is wrong. When you have received the truth, you should teach it to others. Then, with a clear mind, you will not be confused again. "

被髮學邪道。草衣內貪濁。矇矓不識真。如聾聽五音。

Pī fà xué xié dào. Cǎo yī nèi tān zhuó. Méngméng bù shí zhēn. Rú lóng tīng wǔ yīn.

(L: With unbound / hair / learning / wrong / paths. / Straw / clothes / but inside / greedy / and impure. / Dim / and ignorant / not / recognizing / the true. / Like / a deaf person / listening / to the five / tones.)

"With unbound hair and dressed in straw they study wrong paths, but inside they are greedy and impure. Dim and ignorant, they do not recognize the truth, like a deaf person listening to the five musical tones. "

學能捨三惡。以藥消衆毒。健夫度生死。如蛇脫故皮。

Xué néng shě sān è. Yǐ yào xiāo zhòng dú. Jiàn fū dù shēng sǐ. Rú shé tuō gù pí.

(L: Learning / enables / to abandon / the three / evils. / With / medicine / to dispel / the multitude / of poisons. / The powerful / person / crosses / birth-and-death. / Like / a snake / shedding / its old / skin.)

"The teaching enables us to give up the three evils (greed, hatred, and ignorance). With this medicine, we dispel the many poisons. The powerful person thus transcends life and death, like a snake shedding its old skin."

學而多聞。持戒不失。兩世見譽。所願者得。

Xué ér duō wén. Chí jiè bù shī. Liǎng shì jiàn yù. Suǒ yuàn zhě dé.

(L: Learning / and / much / hearing. / Upholding / ethics / not / losing. / In two / worlds / receiving / praise. / What / one wishes for / is obtained.)

"Whoever learns and hears much of the teaching, and does not lose his ethical discipline, will be praised in two worlds—this one and the next. What they wish for, they will obtain. "

學而寡聞。持戒不完。兩世受痛。喪其本願。

Xué ér guǎ wén. Chí jiè bù wán. Liǎng shì shòu tòng. Sàng qí běn yuàn.

(L: Learning / and / little / hearing. / Upholding / ethics / not / complete. / In two / worlds / receiving / pain. / Losing / one's / original / wish.)

"But whoever learns and hears little of the teaching, and whose ethical discipline is incomplete, will receive pain in two worlds and lose his original wish (for liberation). "

夫學有二。常親多聞。安諦解義。雖困不邪。

Fū xué yǒu èr. Cháng qīn duō wén. Ān dì jiě yì. Suī kùn bù xié.

(L: Now / learning / has / two [aspects]. / Constantly / being near / much / heard [knowledge]. / Peacefully / and truly / understanding / the meaning. / Although / in distress / not / straying.)

"The study has two aspects: be constantly in the company of profound knowledge, and come to a peaceful and true understanding of its meaning. Then, even in adversity, you will not stray from the path. 129"

稀稗害禾。多欲妨學。耘除眾惡。成收必多。

Tí bài hài hé. Duō yù fáng xué. Yún chú zhòng è. Chéng shōu bì duō. 131

(L: Weeds / harm / the grain. / Much / desire / hinders / study. / Weeding / and removing / the multitude / of evils. / The completed / harvest / surely / will be much.)

"Just as weeds harm the grain harvest, so desire hinders study. Whoever weeds out all this evil will surely reap a rich harvest. "

慮而後言。辭不強梁。法說義說。言而莫違。

Lǚ ér hòu yán. Cí bù qiáng liáng. Fǎ shuō yì shuō. Yán ér mò wéi.

(L: Think / and / after / speak. / Words / not / harsh / and arrogant. / Dharma / speaking / meaning / speaking. / Speaking / and / not / deviating.)

"Think before you speak. Let your words not be harsh or arrogant. 138 Speak of the Dharma, speak of its meaning, and never contradict what you say. "

善學無犯。畏法曉忌。見微知者。誠無後患。

Shàn xué wú fàn. Wèi fǎ xiǎo jì. Jiàn wēi zhī zhě. Chéng wú hòu huàn.

(L: Good / learning / without / transgression. / Reverence for / the Dharma / understanding / taboos. / Seeing / the small / and knowing / the consequences. / Warning / without / later / problems.)

"Whoever learns well commits no transgressions. They have reverence for the Dharma and understand what must be avoided. They see the smallest cause and know its consequences. Such discipline prevents future problems. "

遠捨罪福。務成梵行。終身自攝。是名善學。

Yuǎn shě zuì fú. Wù chéng fàn xíng. Zhōngshēn zì shè. Shì míng shàn xué.

(L: Far / abandoning / evil / and happiness. / Striving / to complete / the holy / path. / Lifelong / self / control. / This / is called / well / learned.)

"Give up the attachment to both evil and worldly happiness. Strive to complete the holy path (Brahmacarya). Whoever practices self-control throughout his life can truly be called 'well-learned'."

多聞品第三

Chapter Three:

Listen Closely

多聞品者。亦勸聞學積聞成聖。自致正覺。

Duōwén pīn zhě. Yì quàn wén xué jī wén chéng shèng. Zì zhì zhèng jué.

(L: Much hearing / chapter / that which... / Also / exhorts / to hear / and learn / to accumulate / hearing / and become / a sage. / Self / attains / right / enlightenment.)

"This chapter on 'Deep Listening' is an exhortation to listen and to learn. By collecting the heard teachings, one becomes a sage and attains perfect enlightenment through one's own power."