



The Dhammapada and Ethical Teachings: Understanding the Importance and Significance in Modern Context

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Abstract

The Dhammapada's ancient verses, available in numerous languages and manuscripts since antiquity, continue to inspire individuals seeking a balanced and meaningful life. By presenting Buddhism as both a confirmation and a corrective to earlier Vedic teachings, it establishes a distinctive moral vision emphasizing freedom from craving, personal effort in spiritual progress, and the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. The Dhammapada is one of the most revered and widely studied texts in early Buddhist literature and ancient Indian spiritual writings. As part of the Theravāda Pāli Canon's Khuddaka Nikāya, the Dhammapada has been recognized since ancient times as a core source conveying the essence of the Buddha's moral philosophy in accessible language. The text's emphasis on inner transformation rather than coercion highlights a universal moral framework grounded in compassion, mindfulness, and non-violence, which resonates profoundly in contemporary pluralistic societies. In today's globalized world, where religious and cultural diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity, the Dhammapada offers ethical guidance that transcends sectarian boundaries. It teaches that liberation (Nibbāna), the ultimate goal of Buddhism, is attainable through the cultivation of the Noble Eightfold Path, comprising morality (Sīla), concentration (Samādhi), and wisdom (Paññā) along with the conditioned arising (paṭicca-samuppāda), and the impermanence of self (anattā) which provides a philosophical foundation for understanding human experience and moral responsibility without reliance on metaphysical dogma or rigid doctrines. Moreover, the text's stress on moral discipline and mental cultivation remains highly relevant for addressing ethical dilemmas and fostering peace in modern life.

This paper underscores how the Dhammapada remains a vital resource for understanding ethical conduct, mental wellbeing, and spiritual liberation in the contemporary world, making it a timeless guide for individuals and societies striving for harmony

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and enlightenment. The article further examines its ethical teachings, emphasizing their importance and relevance in the modern context. Central to the text is the Buddha's practical vision of human behavior governed by moral causality (*kamma-niyama*), which underscores the principle that wholesome actions lead to beneficial outcomes, while unwholesome actions bring suffering. The teachings are not merely theoretical but are intended for lived experience, encouraging ethical conduct, mental purification, and an insightful understanding to transcend ignorance and attachment.

Keywords : Dhammapada, Nibbāna, Paññā, Mettā, Ahimsā

Introduction

The Dhammapada, an anthology of 423 verses, divided into 26 Chapters, has long been recognized as one of the masterpieces of early Buddhist literature and the ancient Indian literature. From ancient times to the present, The Dhammapada has been regarded as the most succinct expression of the Buddha's teaching found in the Theravada Pāli Canon of scriptures known as the KhuddakaNikāya of the SuttaPiṭaka. The Dhammapada contains, as its title signifies, authentic texts gathered from ancient canonical literature and are generally connected with some incident or other in the history of the Buddha. The title 'Dhammapada' has been variously interpreted. Scholars have found it difficult to translate the word 'Dhamma' (Skt. Dharma) into English as it has many meanings in the present case the word is taken to mean the sayings of the Buddha. The word 'Pada' generally signifies sections, portions, paths or ways. Hence the word 'Dhammapada' has been translated in a variety of ways viz. the Path of Virtue, the Foot-step of the Law, A Collection of Verses on Religion or Law, and so on. But from my view point, it should be called 'The Compendium of Buddhist Moral Teachings'. Nobody would disagree on the point that The Dhammapada represents the ethico-psychological system of the Buddha. From the contents of the book in question, it is quite clear that it has been compiled in order to educate the followers the teachings of the Buddha in a very simple language. One of the verses of the book which offers the essence of the Buddhist moral teachings in the following ways:

“Sabbapāpassa akarana kusallasaupasampadā

Sacitta pariyodapanam, Etaṃ Buddhana sāsanaṃ”

The Dhammapada is available in almost every language of the world but five of the earliest versions are: Pāli, Prākṛit, Mixed Sanskrit and Sanskrit and Chinese (Fa-Kheu-King). The Dhammapada is the first Pāli text translated in Europe in Latin language by a renowned scholar of Buddhism named V. Fousboll in 1855 and then it was translated into English by Max Muller in 1881. The Prākṛit Dhammapada is in the Kharoṣṭhi Script and its complete copy discovered in 1892 at Komali Major near Khotan in Central Asia which dates back to 100 CE.

The Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā or the commentary on the Dhammapada is nothing other than a huge collection of legends and folk-tales which are associated with the teachings of the Buddha (Burlingame 26). This work contains 305 stories which give context to 423 verses. It is generally believed that the Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā came into existence sometime between the fourth and fifth century CE (Burlingame 58). It is traditionally ascribed to Buddhaghōṣa but the language and style of this commentary differ much from those of his well-known works such as the Visuddhimagga and the commentaries on the first four Nikāyas (Burlingame 60). The Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā is translated into English by Eugene Watson Burlingame under the title Buddhist Legends. Saddharma Ratanavaliya is also a Sinhala text of Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā, which is translated by Venerable Dharmasena of Sri Lanka (Piyadassi 55). The Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā is a significant source to know about the conditions of ancient India. It is also a good text for those who care about Indian culture through the accounts of India's folklore, customs manners, observations and practices (Piyadassi 55). Lastly, reading

Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā is a good way to get better understanding of the verses in the Dhammapada (Narada 48).

General speaking, reading the Dhammapada, one can feel the taste of the Buddha's teachings directly from his lips. Besides, carefully studying the Dhammapada is essential for the correct understanding of the doctrine of the Buddha from the basic to advance (Lien 15). The Dhammapada is not a book to be read superficially like a novel and shelved aside. It should be read and re-read so that it may serve as a constant companion for inspiration, solace and edification in times of need (Ahr 47). Because of its importance, the Dhammapada has been translated in many languages of the world. It seems that every Buddhist country has its own Dhammapada translation with varying number of stories. The first edition was published in Copenhagen by V. Fausboll along with Latin translation in 1855. It also was the first printed edition of the Pāli text. But it is Max Muller, the first one to translate it into English in 1870. It was followed by A.L. Admuds (Hymns of the Faith) in 1902, by Wagismara and Saunders in 1920 and by F.L. Woodward in 1921 (Buddha's Path of Virtue), by NaradaThera (The Dhammapada) in 1959, by Radhakrishnan in 1966 and by Thomas Byrom (Dhammapada) in 1976. The Chinese version of the Dhammapada Fa-Kheu-pi-ii was translated into English by Samuel Beal under the title Texts from the Buddhist Canon known as Dhammapada in 1878 (Lien 22).

Results and Discussion

The Origin of Dhammapada

After the achievement of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha spent his entire life preaching the true Dharma for the benefit and welfare of humanity. What he taught is called Buddhavacana or the words of the Buddha (Norman 114). There was nothing called piṭaka (Piṭaka is a Pāli and Sanskrit term, meaning basket which is in Sanskrit called Tripiṭaka and in Pāli called Tipiṭaka that means Three Baskets or Triple Basket. It is a traditional term for ancient collections of Buddhist sacred scriptures) at that time. About three months after the demise of the Buddha, the First Buddhist Council was convened at Rājagaha to preserve the pure and authentic tenets of the Buddha's teachings (Sarao & Singh 44). As a result, Tipiṭaka was established as an oral tradition by the noble disciples of the Buddha (Wilkinson 6). Later on, in the third century B.C. during the reign of Asoka, an Indian emperor of the Maurya Dynasty, the teachings of the Buddha became popular worldwide thanks to the policy of great king concerning the nine missions (Seneviratna 7). One of these missions reached Ceylon under the head of Mahinda, the son of Asoka, and finally, the Tipiṭaka was officially committed to writing under the Sinhalese king Vattagamani in the first century BCE (Winternitz 10).

The Tipiṭaka is a collection of three baskets, namely, the Vinaya-piṭaka, the Sutta-piṭaka, and the Abhidhamma-piṭaka. The Vinaya-piṭaka is the best source for the Saṅgha, i.e., the discipline of the ancient Buddhist Order (Winternitz 33). The nucleus of Vinaya-piṭaka is Patimokkha, a list of transgressions against the rules of discipline of the Order, together with the corresponding atonements (Winternitz 22-23). The Abhidhamma-piṭaka is a detailed scholastic analysis and summary of the teachings of the Buddha in the Sutta-piṭaka (Winternitz 60). The Sutta-piṭaka, the largest of the three baskets, is the most reliable source for the Dhamma (Winternitz 10). It consists of five Nikāyas or collections, namely, the Dīgha-nikāya, the Majjhima-nikāya, the Saṃyutta-nikāya, the Aṅguttara-nikāya, and the Khuddaka-nikāya. The last one, the Khuddaka-nikāya, contains fifteen texts of which are listed as follows: Khuddaka-nikāya, Dhammapada, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Suttanipāta, Vimānavatthu, Petavatthu, Theragāthā, Therīgāthā, Jātaka, Niddesa, Paṭisambhidāmagga, Apadāna, Buddhavaṃsa, and Cariyā-pitaka.

The Dhammapada belongs to the second text of the Sutta-piṭaka. It can be considered as a collection of the sayings of the Buddha (Byrom 17) and an anthology of Buddhist devotion and practice

(Radhakrishnan 1). It is the most widely known text in the Buddhist canonical literature and also the text that has been translated repeatedly into different languages (Winternitz 79). Although it is not easy for Buddhist scholars to give exactly the date for its existence, the period of the origin of the Dhammapada might have complied sometime between the advent of the Buddha in the 6th century BCE and the accession of Emperor Aśoka in the third century BCE. However, the verses of the Dhammapada were believed from very early times, that is, from the period of the first Buddhist Council which settled the Canon, to have been utterances of the Buddha himself (Radhakrishnan 2). As most of the verses in the Dhammapada have been picked up from various discourses of five Nikāyas, it highly embodies “if not the very words of the Buddha’s utterance, at least the actual spirit of his teaching” (Burlingame 25).

The Structure of Dhammapada

The Dhammapada consists of 423 gathas or verses which are generally grouped into 26 vaggas or chapters. The number of verses in each chapter is different. Accordingly, the longest chapter is Brāhmaṇavagga which has 41 verses. Arahantavagga and Aṭṭhavagga are the two shortest chapters of which each has 10 verses. Generally, the arrangement of verses in one chapter is based on a specific subject. Most of the chapters are named according to the ethical or doctrinal topic, e.g., Chapter III (Cittavagga), Chapter VII (Arahantavagga), and Chapter XII (Aṭṭhavagga). A few chapters are given according to the metaphorical symbol rather than their doctrinal meaning, e.g., Chapter IV (Pupphavagga) and Chapter XXIII (Nāgavagga).

The twenty-six chapters can be listed as follows:

| Chapter | Title of Chapter | Theme | No. of Verses | No. of Stories |
|---------|------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| I | Yamakavagga | Pairs | 20 | 14 |
| II | Appamādavagga | Mindfulness | 12 | 9 |
| III | Cittavagga | Mind | 11 | 9 |
| IV | Pupphavagga | Flowers | 16 | 12 |
| V | Bālavagga | Fool | 16 | 15 |
| VI | Paṇḍitavagga | Wise | 14 | 11 |
| VII | Arahantavagga | Arahant | 10 | 10 |
| VIII | Sahassavagga | Thousand | 16 | 14 |
| IX | Pāpavagga | Evil | 13 | 12 |
| X | Daṇḍavagga | Punishment | 17 | 11 |
| XI | Jarāvagga | Ageing | 11 | 9 |
| XII | Attavagga | Self | 10 | 10 |
| XIII | Lokavagga | World | 12 | 11 |
| XIV | Buddhavagga | Buddha | 18 | 9 |
| XV | Sukhavagga | Happiness | 12 | 8 |
| XVI | Piyavagga | Affection | 12 | 9 |
| XVII | Kodhavagga | Anger | 14 | 8 |
| XVIII | Malavagga | Impurities | 21 | 21 |
| XIX | Dhammaṭṭhavagga | Righteous | 17 | 10 |

| | | | | |
|-------|----------------|---------------|-----|-----|
| XX | Maggavagga | Path | 17 | 12 |
| XXI | Pakiṇṇakavagga | Miscellaneous | 16 | 9 |
| XXII | Nirayavagga | Niraya | 14 | 9 |
| XXIII | Nāgavagga | Elephant | 14 | 8 |
| XXIV | Taṇhāvagga | Craving | 26 | 12 |
| XXV | Bhikkhuvagga | Bhikkhu | 23 | 12 |
| XXVI | Brāhmaṇavagga | Brahmana | 41 | 40 |
| Total | | | 423 | 305 |

Speaking of the structure of Dhammapada, Bhikkhu Bodhi says, “the work is simply a collection of inspirational or pedagogical verses on the fundamentals of the Dhamma, to be used as a basis for personal edification and instruction” (Buddharakkhita 7).

The Principal Features of Dhammapada

As regards its title, the Dhammapada is the combination of two terms, dhamma and pada. The former has many meanings. It can be translated into English as the ultimate law, justice, righteousness, discipline, and the ultimate truth (Humphreys 59). The latter can be understood as step, foot, and foundation. It is believed that the most fundamental meaning of pada can be path (Strange 69). The Dhammapada can be, therefore, presented in different ways such as “The Way of Truth”, “The Way of Righteousness”, and “The Path of Virtue” (Narada Mahathera 48). Generally, the sayings of the Buddha are called Dhammapada (Osho, 43-45). As regards its teachings, Dhammapada contains both the basic ethical tenets and higher doctrines preached by the Buddha. Relating to the way leading to enlightenment, Dhammapada refers to ariyaatṭhaṅgikamagga or the noble eightfold path (Dh. Verses 191 & 273). The noble eightfold path consists of sammā-diṭṭhi or right view, sammā-saṅkappa or right thought, sammā-vācā or right speech, sammā-kammanta or right action, sammā-ājīva or right livelihood, sammā-vāyāma or right effort, sammā-sati or right mindfulness, and sammā-samādhi or right concentration. These eight factors constitute the triple course of training, viz. sīla or morality, samādhi or concentration, and paññā or wisdom. Accordingly, the first two belong to wisdom, the last three belong to concentration, and the other factors belong to morality. The Dhammapada also refers to Sambodhyaṅgas or the factors of enlightenment (See Dhammapada 89). The seven factors of enlightenment are sati or mindfulness, dhammavicaya or investigation of dhammas, viriya or energy, pīti or joy, passaddhi or serenity, samādhi or concentration, and upekkhā or equanimity. Referring to meditational practices, the Dhammapada highlights some virtues for its advance (For example, verses 23, 27, 35, 36, 37, 88, and so on refer to the virtue of watchfulness for the development of meditation). The interrelationship between wisdom and meditation is also mentioned in the Dhammapada (See Dhammapada 372).

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar classifies the verses of the Dhammapada into thirteen sections according to their ethical purpose. The thirteen sections are known as (1) on good, evil and sin; (2) on craving and lust; (3) on hurt and ill-will; (4) on anger and enmity; (5) on man, mind, and impurities; (6) on self and self-conquest; (7) on wisdom, justice, and good company; (8) on thoughtfulness and mindfulness; (9) on vigilance, earnestness, and boldness; (10) on sorrow and happiness, on charity and kindness; (11) on hypocrisy; (12) on following the right way; and (13) mix not true dhamma with false dhamma (Ambedkar, 355-372). According to Bhikkhu Bodhi, all teachings of Dhammapada are classified into three primary aims, namely, (1) human welfare here and now, (2) a favorable rebirth in the next life, and (3) the achievement of the ultimate goal, nirvana (Buddharakkhita 9).

The Significance of Dhammapada

As part of the Khuddaka-nikāya in the Sutta-piṭaka, the Dhammapada illustrates the ethical and philosophical teachings of the Buddha (Ahir 48). It presents one way of life to the members of the Sangha and another to the laypeople. It, therefore, expounds on a unique Path of Enlightenment (Ahir 47). There are different practical methods leading to enlightenment. These methods, however, have one common principle which is known as Tisikkhā in Pāli or Threefold Training in English. Here, Threefold Training consists of three elements, namely, sīla or morality, samādhior concentration, and paññā or wisdom. According to Theravada canonical texts, the practice of Tisikkhā leads one to the abandonment of lust, hatred, and delusion (A.I.235). Nirvāna is achieved to one who is fully accomplished in this training (A.I.235).

The Dhammapada depicts Threefold Training in various ways. Morality is described in different levels of meaning. Firstly, the Buddha advises one should prevent from evil and unwholesome things even they are just small faults (Dhammapada 84-314.). Secondly, the teachings of the Dhammapada encourage people to seize the opportunity to do good and wholesome things (Dhammapada 118-183). Finally, the Dhammapada praises the nobility of morality like the fragrance of good people who travels even against the wind (Dhammapada 54). Morality is the first and fundamental step for higher cultivation, i.e., concentration, the second factor of Threefold Training. The cultivation of concentration is the crucial standard for the achievement of enlightenment which has been taught by the Buddha himself in many pāli canonical texts including the Dhammapada. Concentration and morality should be cultivated simultaneously (Dhammapada 110). The practice of morality is for the development of meditation and the practice of concentration is for the enhancement and perfection of morality. Concentration can be obtained through the control of the mind (Dhammapada 36).

The reader can see a lot of advantages of concentration for the development of the spiritual path in the Dhammapada. The wise is assigned to clearly and deeply understand the importance in cultivating concentration of the mind (Dhammapada 21-26). Concentration helps one's mind become tranquil and free from insane. Concentration is the core foundation to arise wisdom, the third factor of Threefold Training. The main purpose of Buddhist teachings is to destroy suffering and to bring happiness towards everyone, but only the wise is the one who clearly know the path leading to true happiness, the shore of liberation. The role of wisdom, therefore, occupies a key position in all the teachings of the Buddha. It can be said that Buddhism is the way of the wise, the way of wisdom. It is worth noting that wisdom is generated from inner cultivation, not outer knowledge (Dhammapada 282). Of course, the external phenomena could be objects of contemplation, helping the practitioner see the truth of life. However, it is insight or wisdom that is the core that helps one firmly walk on the path leading to enlightenment and liberation. Wisdom here is seeing the truth of life and the universe; it never considers things by feeling, by guessing, by feeling; but it looks at things and phenomena through the experience of meditation practice.

On the basis of analysis, it can be said that, morality gives birth to concentration and wisdom is the fruition of concentration. However, the fact is that morality, concentration, and wisdom have a mutual relationship, supporting and being closely related to each other. They, therefore, should be cultivated simultaneously (Dhammapada 144). Apart from Threefold Training, the Dhammapada also highlights important and fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Some can be listed as the theory of the four noble truths (Dhammapada 190-398), the four sublime states of the mind (Dhammapada 5- 406), the principle of cause and effect (Dhammapada 15-234), the non-self (Dhammapada 62-367), and the six pāramitās (Dhammapada 3-399). Along with crucial teachings for the members of the Saṃgha, the Dhammapada is also useful for the laity. It contains basic teachings such as taking refuge to the Triple Gem (Dhammapada 188- 192) and observing the five precepts (Dhammapada 246 - 247).

The Dhammapada: Relevance in Modern context from Moral Buddhist Teaching:

The Dhammapada puts all emphasis on the practical realization of the path that leads to the self-realization or Truth. It is about the experiment of Self-realization which leads to the freedom from all illusion and to salvation from karmic entanglement and the cycle of births and death. In redefining in spiritual terms what a Brahmin is it presents Buddha's teachings as both a confirmation of the Vedas and a rectification of wrong interpretations rather than a new faith. Buddhism is a graduated system of moral and mental training with Nibbāna, the highest happiness, as its goal. It is founded upon the principle of causality, the law of cause and effect in the moral domain, that is, in the field of human behavior. Above all, it is a path to liberation from suffering, a goal to be won by cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path in its three stages of morality, concentration, and wisdom (Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā). Buddhism is intolerant towards other religions. Neither the Buddha nor his followers ever imposed his system of thought or his way of life on anyone who would not accept it of his or her own volition. Acceptance was a purely voluntary matter. Even if accepted, how much of it one should practice is one's own responsibility. But regardless of one's personal inclinations, the universal moral laws operate objectively. This peaceful policy of non-compulsion and tolerance, characteristic of the Master's teaching, is born partly of compassion and partly of understanding human nature and the nature of truth. But one must stop there: one should not coerce others or persecute those who refuse to accept one's own beliefs. Wisdom, the ability to see things as they truly are, cannot be imposed on others from the outside. It must grow from within the individual, out of the developing sensitivity and refinement of human nature. This takes time.

Today various proposals are being made to create an all-embracing system of religion, the idea being simply to absorb all other religions into one's own. However, a universal religious consciousness can never be created because:

1. The various religions have fundamentally different conceptions of reality
2. The concept and content of the good life vary between different religions, and
3. No adherent of a religion wants his religion to be absorbed by another body. Is it not deeply rooted in human nature to believe that no other religion in the world compares with one's own?

Buddhism is a religion of moral teachings and a way of life. It differs with other religion of the world on many accounts and its moral teachings are one of the important aspects. It teaches the formula of conditioned arising (Paṭicca-samuppāda) and its reversal by human effort; craving as the creator of life instead of a creator God, a becoming (bhava) without a self (atta), personal evolution according to the quality of one's own deeds (kamma), an impersonal moral order (kamma-niyama) with moral values and moral responsibility, free will, and there with the possibility of a good life, survival after death by the continuity of the individual life-flux without transmigration of an individual, immutable, immortal soul, and a transcendental reality (Nibbāna), realizable here and now solely by one's own effort. As such, there are major and unbridgeable differences between Buddhism and the other world religions and spiritual philosophies.

The idea of a universal religion seems to be unrealistic and impracticable, a mere mirage and an idle delusion. But the Buddha offered another way of relating religions to each other based on mutual respect yet maintaining the separate identity of each religion. To practice this method one need not become a Buddhist. It is also very practical, effective, and does no violence or offense to anyone. It is simply to cultivate regularly four basic social and ethical attitudes:

1. Mettā - a friendly feeling of loving-kindness to all beings in every situation regardless of race, creed, or caste,

2. Karuṇā - compassion for all who suffer, and to take practical steps whenever possible to eliminate or alleviate those sufferings,
3. Muditā - altruistic joy, to be happy in others happiness, in their prosperity and success, thereby counteracting feelings of jealousy and unhealthy rivalry between individuals and groups, and
4. Upekkhā - equanimity, the maintenance of an even mind when faced with the ups and downs inherent in life.

By practicing these virtues daily, a Christian becomes a better Christian, a Hindu a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim. All of these qualities convey a universal message which makes the practitioners universal human beings. Surely, this is universalism in religion par excellence. This is the most satisfactory way of living harmoniously with one's fellow men and women of all faiths, fostering inter-religious goodwill and avoiding religious conflicts. By pursuing this policy for over 2500 years, there has been no religious blood shedding wars in Buddhism. It is also the best method of relating the Buddha's Teachings to other religions. Here I would like to highlight one point with which any Buddhist would find it hard to disagree, and which states an important principle on which dialogue can go forward:

"There is basis for dialogue and for the growth of unity, a growth that should occur at the same rate at which we are able to overcome our divisions --- divisions that to a great degree result from the idea that one can have a monopoly on truth."

For a Buddhist, his or her faith is no bar to dialogue with other religions. The reason is that Buddhism is neither a system of dogmas, nor a doctrine of "salvation" as that term is generally understood in theistic religions. The Buddha exhorted his disciples to take nothing on blind faith, not even his words. Rather, they should listen, and then examine the teachings for themselves, so that they might be convinced of its truth.

In Buddhism, virtuous conduct (Sīla) includes "Right Speech" (Sammā Vācā). And by practicing the virtue of right speech in the context of dialogue, we will be setting an example for the larger community to emulate. The many problems which beset our communities, indeed all human beings, at the close of this century are articulated in the political forum - the environment, nuclear proliferation, international terrorism, human rights, urban violence, social justice, and the like. Representatives of the religious community, therefore, are drawn into the fray. The only question is whether we will rise to the occasion.

Humanity is one of the basic themes of Buddhism. A man is not perfect without humanity. According to the Dhammapada, a man must practice universal love and harmony towards other human beings and also towards other religion. It is highly probable that the Dhammapada believed that by creating a happy, fearless and rational individual, it is quite a possibility to create a peaceful and harmonious society. That is why; the Dhammapada takes the individual as the central to all moral considerations. Since it doesn't believe in God or any other super human power, it holds that the individual himself is his creator as told in the Dhammapada, "One self is the Lord of oneself, who else will be the Lord of oneself". The Dhammapada highly advocates the principle of Ahimsā (Non-violence) and considered it as one of the most valuable teaching of the Buddha for the peaceful co-existence of the community. Through this principle of Ahimsā one can cultivate friendliness towards all living beings which is discussed in the Daṇḍavagga of the Dhammapada.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Buddha has been considered as one of the most revolutionary thinkers ever

heralded on this earth. His compendium of moral teachings called the Dhammapada has been the beacon light not only for Asia but for whole world. Its advocacy of pursuits of moral teachings crosses all the barriers of race, creed, country and even humanity. As a classical testament of early Buddhism, the Dhammapada cannot be gauged in its true value by going through it. It yields its riches only through repeated study, sustained reflection, and most importantly, through the application of its principles to daily life. In that case the Dhammapada be used as a manual for contemplation. The Dhammapada is considered as the Gita of Buddhist literature. The benevolent teachings of the Dhammapada of universal compassion and cosmic goodwill have a significant message for the present distracted human beings from exhaustion of spirit and laughing in the narrow and rigid confinements of ego-centricism, parochialism and disastrous materialistic consumerism. Now the time has come for the cultural renaissance in which the teachings of the Dhammapada can play a vital role. Unlike many religious traditions that may impose belief or practice by external authority, Buddhism, as reflected in the Dhammapada, advocates voluntary acceptance and personal responsibility for spiritual growth. This approach aligns with the Buddha's compassionate and tolerant stance, recognizing the diversity of human nature and the gradual development of wisdom.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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