



THE OPEN DOOR

The Buddha's Life
in Verse

TI-RATANA DHAMMA
Ti-Ratana Buddhist Society

A continuous narrative in six Books
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Books I-V follow the life. Book VI turns towards the reader, with reflection and an original blessing. Page numbers and headings below are clickable in supporting PDF readers.

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Before the first verse

The Open Door follows the Buddha's life as a continuous verse narrative: the child who received care, the seeker who left home, the awakening, the decision to teach, the community that grew, and the final parting. Its six Books invite slow reading. You may read a chapter aloud, or rest with a single stanza.

This is a new literary composition, not a newly discovered scripture. Most stanzas are original poetry drawing on Buddhist texts. Canonical excerpts are distinguished and credited where they appear. The poem's images, reflections and words addressed to the reader belong to this edition; they are not additional sayings attributed to the Buddha. Verse numbers are reading references created for this book.

The main journey follows the traditional sequence of the life. Encounters during the teaching years are gathered by theme, without claiming exact dates or relative order. The source notes remain available at each chapter's end. For longer prayers and Pāli recitations, read the companion volume *The Buddha's Life and Path*.

The Buddha's Life and Path · prayers and recitations

Book I · 1. The child who was carried

1.1

Before the roads filled with those who came to listen,
before the groves were known by the teachings spoken there,
a child was held in the arms of others.
The one who would teach the world
began his life receiving its care.

1.2

Among the Sakyans the child was born,
and Lumbini became a name remembered.
Generations would travel towards that place,
bringing flowers, bringing their children,
bringing the questions that had travelled with them.

1.3

The old accounts surround his birth with wonder:
seven steps, the turning of the heavens,
a promise spoken over the last becoming.
Faith remembers the world made bright
by a life whose meaning it has come to know.

1.4

Asita looked upon the child and rejoiced.
Then the seer wept:
the teaching would arise,
and his own years would end before he heard it.
Joy had opened a place for sorrow beside it.

1.5

So early in the story,
the heart meets what it cannot keep.
A child has arrived;
an old man knows he must depart.
Between them lies the teaching yet to come.

1.6

Māyā's life was brief after the birth.
Mahāpajāpatī gave the child her care,
and the future teacher grew through kindness received.
Remember her hands when the story grows vast.
Remember that someone lifted him when he could not stand.

1.7

We honour the beginning by remembering dependence:
the food prepared, the body sheltered,
the watch kept beside another's sleep.
Compassion is already at work
before anyone gives it a name.

[MN123 · Incredible and Amazing](#)

[SNP3.11 · About Nālaka](#)

[AN8.51 · With Gotamī](#)

Book I · 2. The sheltered years

2.1

There were lotus pools in his father's household,
fine cloth, fragrant sandalwood,
rooms suited to the changing seasons.
Care had gathered around the young Gotama
like shade around a growing tree.

2.2

Yet outside the protection of the house,
and within the bodies of those who protected it,
age continued its patient work.
No gate could ask it to turn away.
No costly garment could make a life stand still.

2.3

He considered the old person
and recognised a condition shared.
Youth was a season through which he was passing;
the bent back belonged to the same world
as the body that still moved easily.

2.4

He considered the sick person.
Health, so familiar that it seemed a possession,
rested upon conditions he could not command.
The distance between the well and the unwell
was smaller than pride had imagined.

2.5

He considered the one who had died.
The breath by which a person spoke a name
could end before another answer came.
The thought reached into his own life
and unsettled its arrangements.

2.6

The early teaching remembers these reflections.
Later tellings give them the shape of encounters on a road.
Across the tellings, the question remains:
what refuge can be found
when everything we hold is liable to change?

2.7

The question did not fit within the shelter built for him.
It remained when the musicians had finished,
when the good meal had been eaten,
when the household had returned to its affairs.
It asked for a life in which to seek an answer.

[AN3.39 · A Delicate Lifestyle](#)

Book I · 3. Those who remain at home

3.1

The leaving is remembered as a going forth.
Hair and beard were cut;
the robe of a renunciant was put on.
Gotama entered the homeless life
while he was young and his parents grieved.

3.2

Let their grief remain in the telling.
Let the household have its human weight:
the bonds of care, the hopes for another's future,
the love that finds a familiar place empty
and must learn how to live beside the emptiness.

3.3

The road carried a seeker.
The house held those who loved him.
One life had changed its direction,
and other lives felt the turning.
Renunciation entered the world of relationship.

3.4

He had recognised his own subjection
to birth, to ageing, to sorrow and death.
To search only among things bound to the same conditions
would leave the deepest question waiting.
He sought the peace the teachings call the deathless.

3.5

He could carry a bowl and receive what was given.
He could learn from those willing to teach.
He could place his strength within a discipline
and discover where it led.
The answer was still beyond him.

3.6

We know the ending when we read the beginning.
He walked without that comfort of a finished book.
Before the name Buddha was his,
there were roads on which he was learning,
and teachings whose limits he had yet to see.

MN26 · The Noble Quest

PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter

Book I · 4. The teachers on the road

4.1

He came to Āḷāra Kālāma
and asked to live within his teaching.
He listened, remembered and practised.
Words became a discipline of attention;
the discipline opened into attainment.

4.2

His teacher offered him an equal place.
Honour was within reach,
and a community in which to remain.
Yet the ending of craving had not been found.
The unfinished question called him onward.

4.3

He came to Uddaka Rāmaputta
and learned of the attainment associated with Rāma.
Again his mind entered what had been described.
Again a place of leadership was offered.
Again the search had further to go.

4.4

A traveller may be grateful for a shelter
and still leave it when the morning comes.
Learning had given him something real.
He carried that learning onward
without mistaking it for the end of the road.

4.5

At Uruvelā he found a grove,
a river flowing beside accessible banks,
a village near enough for alms.
Here were seclusion and the means to live.
Here he would give himself to striving.

4.6

The river ran beside the place of effort.
Its banks would become part of a remembered landscape.
For now there was a seeker,
a body that could labour,
and an understanding still being tested.

MN26 · The Noble Quest

Book II · 5. When striving became hunger

5.1

He brought great resolve to the austerities.
He restrained, endured and ate little.
Five companions attended him,
waiting for the knowledge
they hoped such effort would bring.

5.2

The body grew thin.
Bones stood out beneath the skin;
strength drained from the limbs.
The account remembers suffering closely,
as though it would let no reader call the cost small.

5.3

Days of effort could be gathered into pride.
Pain could become a thing to display.
But suffering, however fiercely endured,
had not answered suffering.
The goal remained unreached.

5.4

At the limit of that road,
he allowed a question to disturb his method.
What if the way had been mistaken?
What if devotion to the search
required a change in how the search was made?

5.5

It takes resolve to continue.

It also takes resolve to see clearly
when continuation would deepen an error.

The long labour was not erased.

Its failure had become something he could understand.

5.6

Five companions watched a body diminish.

Within that difficult history,

another possibility was about to return:

a memory of shade,

and of a happiness that had harmed no one.

MN36 · The Longer Discourse With Saccaka

Book II · 6. The remembered shade

6.1

He remembered sitting beneath a tree
while his father was occupied with work.
There had been a stillness of attention,
a happiness born of seclusion,
the mind gathered without cruelty towards the body.

6.2

The memory returned to a man weakened by hunger.
Its gentleness had survived the years.
He considered whether such collectedness
could belong to the path of awakening.
The search made room for a different kind of strength.

6.3

‘I recall sitting in the cool shade of a black plum tree while my father the Sakyan was off working. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.
Could that be the path to awakening?’
Stemming from that memory came the understanding:
‘That is the path to awakening!’

CANONICAL EXCERPT · MN36 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[MN36 · The Longer Discourse With Saccaka](#)

6.4

He accepted solid food.
The body received what it needed,
and strength began to return.
His companions saw indulgence
where he had recognised a necessary turning.

6.5

They left disappointed.
He continued without their approval.
The road had become quieter,
and the work ahead could no longer be measured
by how much suffering others saw him bear.

6.6

Here the life offers a tenderness worth remembering:
nourishment received,
effort made sustainable,
the possibility that a mind may become clear
without making an enemy of the body that supports it.

6.7

A memory of shade had opened a path.
What had seemed too gentle to be important
became a clue at the edge of exhaustion.
He took it seriously
and began again.

MN36 · The Longer Discourse With Saccaka

Book II · 7. The long night

7.1

With strength restored, his attention settled.
The mind gathered and grew steady.
The movements that had troubled it became still,
and a lucid balance opened
through successive depths of collectedness.

7.2

The discourses remember the night through three knowledges.
Former lives were recollected;
the passing and arising of beings were seen;
the ending of the corrupting influences was known.
Thus the tradition tells the awakening.

7.3

At the heart of that account is suffering understood,
its arising understood,
its cessation realised,
and the way to cessation fulfilled.
The question of the road reached its answer.

7.4

Craving could no longer bind the mind as before.
Ignorance no longer governed the search.
There was knowledge of release.
The one who had sought awakening
was remembered now as the Awakened One.

7.5

The earth of the story still held rivers and villages.
People would still fall ill;
those who loved would still face separation.
Into this same vulnerable world
a way of freedom had been found.

7.6

So let the night be remembered with reverence.
Let its silence have room around it.
A life had crossed the wilderness of its own search,
and the teaching that would reach others
had its beginning in that release.

MN36 · The Longer Discourse With Saccaka

MN4 · Fear and Dread

Book II · 8. A bowl after awakening

8.1

The monastic account remembers the Buddha
dwelling near the trees of awakening,
contemplating the arising of suffering through conditions
and its ending as those conditions cease.
Peace had become the ground of understanding.

8.2

Then the story remembers food.
Tapussa and Bhallika, travelling merchants,
brought an offering to the newly awakened teacher.
Their part in the great account
was something they could carry in their hands.

8.3

They took refuge in the Buddha and the teaching.
The company of awakened disciples was still to come.
A beginning can be small enough
to fit around a bowl,
and large enough to be remembered across centuries.

8.4

Someone offers.
Someone receives.
A spiritual life, however profound its understanding,
continues among people
who can give one another what is needed.

8.5

The reader who cannot travel far
may still know this part of the road:
food brought to another,
time freely given,
a kindness completed without an audience.

8.6

The account moves onward towards the teaching.
Before the crowds and the long journeys,
let the merchants keep their place.
The world had already begun
to answer awakening with generosity.

[PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter](#)

Book III · 9. The teaching that might have remained unspoken

9.1

At the banyan beside the Nerañjarā,
the Buddha considered the depth of what he had realised.
The Dhamma was subtle,
hard to see for those delighted by clinging,
hard to explain to those who cherished their chains.

9.2

How could a life devoted to grasping
recognise the peace of letting go?
How could the quiet ending of craving
be heard amid the wishes
by which people arranged their days?

9.3

The discourse allows the hesitation to remain.
Its teacher is not made into a figure
who speaks because the story requires a speech.
He considers whether others will understand.
His mind inclines towards remaining at ease.

9.4

Around this moment, later listeners may feel
the weight of everything they have received:
a verse remembered at a funeral,
the refuge spoken with a child,
the teaching that steadied a difficult day.

9.5

All these lie ahead of the silence.
All the voices that will carry the Dhamma
wait beyond a decision still to be made.
The telling pauses there,
at the edge of a gift the world has not yet heard.

9.6

Then the scripture turns towards an appeal.
Another sees what may be lost.
Compassion enters the scene as a request:
let the teaching be heard,
for some are ready to understand.

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

Book III · 10. Little dust

10.1

The scripture names him Brahmā Sahampati.
He comes before the Buddha,
arranges his robe over one shoulder,
kneels and raises his joined palms.
His request carries the need of those who have not heard.

10.2

“Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the Holy One
teach the Dhamma!
There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They’re in
decline because they haven’t heard the teaching.
There will be those who understand the teaching!”

CANONICAL EXCERPT · SN6.1 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

10.3

There is tenderness in the reason he gives.
Someone may be nearer to understanding
than the world has allowed them to discover.
A little dust may lie upon the eye;
the capacity to see may still be there.

10.4

The appeal makes room for a person overlooked:
the one who has never met a patient teacher,
the one whose question has been laughed away,
the one who has heard the language of religion
and has yet to hear a teaching they can enter.

10.5

These are the people a present reader may remember.
Their names are our own addition to the ancient scene.
The scripture's appeal is wider:
beings are suffering,
and there will be those who understand.

10.6

Rise, hero! Victor in battle, caravan leader,
wander the world free of debt.
Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!
There will be those who understand!"

CANONICAL EXCERPT · SN6.1 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

10.7

The raised palms ask for a beginning.
They do not require the whole world to understand at once.
A teaching may reach one person today,
another after years of living,
another through the kindness of someone it has changed.

10.8

Let the appeal be heard slowly.
Let there be room after it for the person who listens.
Somewhere in that room
may be a reader who has never imagined
that the invitation could include them.

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

Book III · 11. The lotus pool

11.1

The Buddha looked upon the world with compassion.
He saw difference:
faculties keen and weak,
lives easier and harder to teach,
eyes with much dust and eyes with little.

11.2

The discourse gives us a pool of lotuses.
Some grow beneath the water;
some have reached its surface;
some rise clear,
with no water clinging to them.

11.3

It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses.
Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising
above it, thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in
the water reaching the water's surface. And some of them
sprout and grow in the water but rise up above the water and
stand with no water clinging to them.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · SN6.1 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

11.4

The image asks the eye to linger.
There is more than one depth in the same pool.
What has not yet reached the surface
belongs to the living scene
as surely as what has opened above it.

11.5

For the reader, this can become a way of patience.
One person understands through a brief encounter.
Another learns through repetition and time.
A third begins to listen only after suffering
has made an old certainty impossible to keep.

11.6

The poem offers that patience as a reflection.
The source tells us why the Buddha taught:
he saw beings capable of understanding.
Compassion looked closely enough
to recognise the possibility in them.

11.7

So the world was seen in its differences,
and the possibility of teaching remained.
The silence beside the river
would open into speech.
The long journey towards others could begin.

SN6.1 · [The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

Book III · 12. The open door

12.1

Then the Buddha answered Sahampati in verse.
The appeal had been heard;
the world had been surveyed with compassion.
What follows in the scripture
is the answer around which this book turns.

12.2

“Flung open are the doors to freedom from death!
Let those with ears to hear commit to faith.
Thinking it would be troublesome, Divinity, I did not teach
the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among mankind.”

CANONICAL EXCERPT · SN6.1 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

12.3

The door is an image large enough
to hold the gratitude of generations.
Someone heard a teaching and changed direction.
Someone found the courage to stop harming.
Someone learned to sit beside their grief.

12.4

Those are fruits a reader may recognise in ordinary life.
The source’s promise reaches deeper:
freedom from the bondage of death and renewed becoming,
the peace for which the seeker had left home.
The open door keeps that goal before us.

12.5

To hear is a beginning.
To listen again is another beginning.
To practise what has been understood
brings the teaching out of the words
and into the life that received them.

12.6

Sahampati bowed and departed.
The teacher remained,
and the roads of the world lay before him.
He would go to those who had helped him strive,
and tell them what he had found.

12.7

The story moves because compassion has moved within it.
The grove will give way to the road;
the road will lead to the deer park.
The door has opened.
Now there must be footsteps.

[SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity](#)

Book III · 13. The five who listened

13.1

At Isipatana, the five saw Gotama approaching.
They remembered the food he had accepted
and the austerities he had left behind.
They agreed to withhold honour.
Old disappointment stood between them and the teacher.

13.2

Yet as he drew near, they rose to receive him.
A seat was prepared; water was brought.
The account allows distrust and care
to occupy the same encounter.
Understanding had still to be reached.

13.3

He taught the middle way:
view and intention,
speech, action and livelihood,
effort, mindfulness and collectedness.
A life would be trained through the whole of it.

13.4

Suffering was to be understood.
Craving was to be abandoned.
Cessation was to be realised.
The path was to be developed.
Each truth entrusted the listener with work to do.

13.5

“Koṇḍañña has really understood! Koṇḍañña has really understood!”

CANONICAL EXCERPT · SN56.11 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[SN56.11 · Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma](#)

13.6

In that moment the teaching had reached another.
The joy of it is remembered by name:
Koṇḍañña understood.
A person who had once doubted
had become a person who could see.

13.7

There followed patient days of instruction.
Some went for alms while others listened;
then they exchanged their tasks.
The bowls brought back from the village
fed the small company of the path.

13.8

And they learned to release the claim of “mine”
upon the changing body and mind.
The teacher’s freedom was no distant ornament.
It was the direction of their training,
and, in the account, a freedom they too realised.

[MN26 · The Noble Quest](#)

[SN56.11 · Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma](#)

[SN22.59 · The Characteristic of Not-Self](#)

Book III · 14. Good in the beginning

14.1

Others came: Yasa and his companions,
householders who heard and gave,
people whose lives took a new direction.
The company grew,
and the teaching was ready to travel beyond one grove.

14.2

The Buddha sent the liberated disciples out.
His instruction joined freedom to compassion,
and the happiness of the many
to the work of those
who had themselves crossed beyond bondage.

14.3

Go wandering, monks, for the benefit and happiness of
humanity, out of compassion for the world, for the good,
benefit, and happiness of gods and humans.
You should each go a different way.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · PLI-TV-KD1 · Bhikkhu Brahmāli · CC0

[PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter](#)

14.4

Proclaim the Teaching that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, that has a true goal and is well articulated. Set out the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life.

There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are ruined because of not hearing the Teaching. There will be those who understand.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · PLI-TV-KD1 · Bhikkhu Brahmāli · CC0

[PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter](#)

14.5

Good in the beginning:
may the first encounter with the teaching
bring clarity and room to breathe.
May a person hear that conduct can be changed,
and find an honest place from which to start.

14.6

Good in the middle:
when enthusiasm has become daily effort,
when old habits return,
may the path remain worthy of trust
through the patient work it asks us to do.

14.7

Good in the end:
the aim of release kept whole,
the ending of greed, hatred and delusion,
the peace towards which the teaching leads.
May beauty of language serve that freedom.

14.8

These wishes belong to the present poem.
The ancient instruction sent disciples down different roads.
Their paths would cross villages and generations.
The request made beside the river
was becoming a gift carried into the world.

PLI-TV-KD1 · [The great chapter](#)

Book IV · 15. An inheritance for Rāhula

15.1

When the Buddha returned among the Sakyans,
Rāhula's mother sent the child towards him.
The boy followed his father,
asking for his inheritance.
The story brought the road back to the household.

15.2

The inheritance became a life of training.
Sāriputta received the task of giving him the going forth.
Suddhodana's grief was also heard,
and parental permission became a rule
for children entering the community.

15.3

Later the father taught the son through a mirror.
Look before you act.
Look while you act.
Look again when the action is done.
Attend to the harm it may bring to yourself or another.

15.4

A mirror does not need a person to be flawless
before it can show what is there.
It asks for the willingness to look.
Truthfulness gives correction a place to begin;
honesty keeps learning possible.

15.5

So the child received a way of returning:
from heedlessness to attention,
from a mistake to acknowledgement,
from harm towards restraint.
His famous father did not exempt him from that work.

15.6

The reader may keep this inheritance too.
Before a message is sent,
before an angry word is given a listener,
there may be one small interval
in which the mirror can be lifted.

15.7

And after an error, the mirror still remains.
The past cannot be unsaid.
The next action can be considered.
Responsibility gives the future
something different to receive.

[PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter](#)

[MN61 · Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhika](#)

Book IV · 16. The women at the threshold

16.1

Mahāpajāpatī came seeking the homeless life.
The woman who had nourished the child
now sought the teaching of the man he had become.
The account remembers refusal,
and the resolve with which she continued.

16.2

She and the Sakyan women reached Vesālī.
Ānanda saw her distress and spoke for her request.
Could women realise the fruits of the path?
The question entered the account plainly,
and the answer was plain.

16.3

“Sir, is a lady able to realize the fruits of stream-entry,
once-return, non-return, and perfection once she has gone
forth?”
“She is able, Ānanda.”

CANONICAL EXCERPT · AN8.51 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

AN8.51 · With Gotamī

16.4

The account goes on to impose unequal rules.
Let the difficult part remain visible.
Reverence can bear an honest reading,
and a poem need not smooth the old text
until every struggle has disappeared.

16.5

Then let the women speak in their own right.
Their verses have crossed the centuries:
effort and exhaustion,
grief and understanding,
the knowledge of a freedom realised.

16.6

A community's memory grows fuller
when it can hear these voices.
The teaching was lived in their bodies,
tested within their circumstances,
and carried onwards through what they taught.

16.7

Remember the foster mother at the beginning.
Remember the practitioner who later asked to enter.
Care given and freedom sought
meet within one life.
Both belong in the telling.

AN8.51 · With Gotamī

SN5.2 · With Somā

THIG6.1 · Five Hundred Students of Paṭācārā

Book IV · 17. Water for the sick

17.1

There was a monk ill with dysentery,
lying uncared for in his dwelling.
The others had left him without a nurse.
He could do little for them,
and they had done little for him.

17.2

The Buddha came with Ānanda.
They brought water.
They washed the sick man
and lifted him onto a bed.
The teaching took the form of work done by hand.

17.3

Before the assembly heard a correction,
the suffering person had received care.
Water touched the neglected body.
Two people attended to what was needed.
The room was no longer a place of abandonment.

17.4

If you don't nurse one another, who will?
Whoever would nurse me should nurse one who is sick.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · PLI-TV-KD8 · Bhikkhu Brahmāli · CC0

[PLI-TV-KD8 · 1. The account of Jīvaka](#)

17.5

Let this passage have a place beside the radiant ones.
Let it be read when devotion seeks an action.
There is a bed to clean,
a meal to bring,
a tired carer who may need another pair of hands.

17.6

The person who can offer little in return
still belongs within the circle of care.
Illness has not cancelled their claim
to patience, dignity
and the presence of another human being.

17.7

When the book closes,
the water in this story can remain with us:
an ordinary thing,
brought at the necessary time,
by someone who decided to help.

PLI-TV-KD8 · 1. The account of Jīvaka

Book IV · 18. A hand that lays the weapon down

18.1

The road to Aṅgulimāla was feared.
People warned the Buddha against it.
A man who had killed many
was living there,
and the harm he had done was real.

18.2

The discourse tells an extraordinary encounter:
the pursuer could not catch the walking Buddha.
He called for the teacher to stop.
The answer turned the word towards violence,
and towards the stopping his own life still required.

18.3

He laid down his weapons.
The life of training began.
The story remembers a terrible capacity to harm
turning towards restraint,
and, through practice, towards release.

18.4

Those harmed are not erased by that turn.
Later stones struck the former killer;
his bowl was broken and his body injured.
The account lets transformation and consequence
remain within the same life.

18.5

For never is hatred
laid to rest by hate,
it's laid to rest by love:
this is an ancient teaching.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · DHP1-20 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

DHP1-20 · 1. Pairs

18.6

For a reader, goodwill can begin modestly:
may this person cease to harm.
May those in danger be protected.
May truth be spoken and responsibility taken.
May a better future have conditions in which to grow.

18.7

The hand that has held a weapon
can learn to put it down.
The world still needs protection and repair.
Compassion attends to that whole work,
and does not hurry those who have been hurt.

MN86 · With Aṅgulimāla

DHP1-20 · 1. Pairs

Book IV · 19. The companions of the path

19.1

Sāriputta first heard through Assaji.
He carried what he had understood to Moggallāna.
One encounter became another,
and the path widened through companionship.
The teaching travelled between people who listened.

19.2

Ānanda spoke of spiritual friendship.
The Buddha answered with an emphasis
large enough to change the measure of it.
Companionship belonged at the heart
of the life they were undertaking.

19.3

Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the
spiritual life.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · SN45.2 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[SN45.2 · Half the Spiritual Life](#)

19.4

A good companion can remind without humiliating,
listen without flattering,
rejoice without rivalry,
and speak when silence would leave a friend in harm.
These are ways a reader may practise the teaching's direction.

19.5

The ancient community also quarrelled.
It needed kindness in deed, speech and intention,
the sharing of what was received,
ethical discipline and understanding.
Concord had conditions to be cultivated.

19.6

So friendship belongs among the serious matters.
Who we hear, what we encourage,
whose distress we notice,
whose correction we can receive:
these help shape the road beneath our feet.

19.7

May a reader find such companionship.
May a reader become such a companion.
The grove is made welcoming
by those who leave a place
for another person to sit and learn.

SN45.2 · Half the Spiritual Life

PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter

MN48 · The Mendicants of Kosambī

Book IV · 20. A grove made ready

20.1

Anāthapiṇḍika's gift became Jeta's Grove,
a place named at the opening of many teachings.
The words have travelled far;
the gift remains quietly within them,
holding open the place where people gathered.

20.2

Visākhā remembered particular needs:
food for those who were sick,
food for those who nursed them,
medicines and practical necessities.
Generosity had learned to pay attention.

20.3

Ambapālī offered a meal and her grove.
The final-journey account receives her gift with honour.
A person came forward with what she could give,
and the community received it.
Her name remained within the story.

20.4

Many other names have not reached us.
Still, the journeys required food,
the dwellings required care,
the gatherings required people
who made them possible.

20.5

This verse remembers the unnamed as a reflection:
the person who prepares before others arrive,
the person who clears away after they leave,
the person whose steady service
rarely becomes the subject of a speech.

20.6

May such giving be met with gratitude.
May service leave room for rest.
A community is sustained through many hands,
and kindness grows more durable
when those hands also receive care.

PLI-TV-KD16 · 1. The allowance for dwellings

PLI-TV-KD8 · 1. The account of Jīvaka

DN16 · The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment

Book V · 21. The evening sun

21.1

The Buddha sat with his back towards the evening sun.
Ānanda attended to his limbs
and saw the changes of age:
the skin, the posture,
the body's altered strength.

21.2

The teacher acknowledged what was visible.
Youth was subject to ageing,
health to sickness,
life to death.
The awakened body also grew old.

21.3

There is gentleness in this remembered scene:
warmth received,
limbs attended to,
a companion close enough
to notice what time had changed.

21.4

Then another account brings news of Sāriputta's death.
His bowl and robes are carried back.
Ānanda is shaken by the loss
of one who had counselled and encouraged him,
one who had never tired of teaching.

21.5

The Buddha compares the loss
to a great branch broken from a living tree.
The community has lost something precious.
The training in conduct, wisdom and release
still remains for those who are alive.

21.6

Gratitude does not require us to hold a person forever.
It can become the way we carry forward
what their care made possible.
The voice is absent;
something learned from it may still guide an action.

21.7

The final road draws nearer.
The teacher will need places to rest.
Companions will have more to learn about parting.
The evening sun continues to offer
its ordinary warmth.

[SN48.41 · Old Age](#)

[SN47.13 · With Cunda](#)

Book V · 22. The gift of Cunda

22.1

At Pāvā, Cunda the smith prepared a meal.
The Buddha and the community received his offering.
Afterwards came severe illness,
and the journey continued
towards the sal grove at Kusinārā.

22.2

The teacher needed rest along the road.
Ānanda prepared a place for him.
Water and a folded robe
belonged now among the important things.
The body was nearing its limit.

22.3

Yet the Buddha also thought of Cunda.
The giver might be blamed;
remorse might gather around his offering.
Ānanda was to reassure him
and preserve the honour of his generosity.

22.4

In the account, the meal before the final passing
is honoured alongside the meal before awakening.
The giver is to receive comfort.
The approaching death is not to become
a grief laid at his door as guilt.

22.5

This kindness reaches beyond the teacher's remaining hours.
It considers what people may say afterwards,
whose name may be wounded by their sorrow,
and what reassurance should be carried
before that sorrow begins its work.

22.6

May we remember this part of the final journey:
the care taken with another person's future,
the good intention protected from a careless accusation,
the mind that still made room for someone else
when its own body was in pain.

DN16 · The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment

Book V · 23. Ānanda's tears

23.1

In the sal grove, Ānanda withdrew and wept.
He was still a learner,
and the teacher who had cared for him
was about to pass away.
Years of service could not prevent the parting.

23.2

The Buddha called him back.
The final-passing discourse remembers an acknowledgement:
long service through loving actions,
loving speech,
and loving thought.

23.3

The companion was seen.
What he had given was remembered.
The teaching on separation
did not make gratitude unnecessary.
The last hours had room for both.

23.4

Let this be part of how we speak to those who grieve.
Let us remember the care they gave,
the nights kept, the journeys made,
the familiar duties
that love performed again and again.

23.5

A teaching on impermanence can be spoken gently.
Its truth need not become a demand
that another person stop feeling
before we are willing
to remain beside them.

23.6

Ānanda would continue to serve through the final hours.
Later tradition would remember his voice
in the preservation of the discourses.
The one who wept beside the ending
would help others hear the teaching's beginning.

DN16 · The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment

Book V · 24. Beneath the sal trees

24.1

The Buddha lay between the trees.
The account surrounds him with offerings and wonder,
and places within that reverence
a practical instruction:
the Dhamma is most deeply honoured through practice.

24.2

Subhadda came with questions.
Ānanda tried to spare the exhausted teacher,
but the visitor was allowed to approach.
Even there, another person's understanding
could still become the work of the hour.

24.3

The Buddha spoke of the path.
Subhadda entered the community.
The story's last disciple arrived
while others were preparing to lose their teacher.
An ending still held a beginning within it.

24.4

The community was told what would remain:
the teaching and discipline
would be its teacher after the passing.
What had been learned
was entrusted to those who would live it.

24.5

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants:
“Come now, mendicants, I say to you all:
‘Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence.’”
These were the Realized One’s last words.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · DN16 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CC0

[DN16 · The Great Discourse on the Buddha’s Extinguishment](#)

24.6

Then the account describes the meditative attainments
and the final passing.
Some were overcome by grief;
others remained composed in understanding.
The grove held the community in its differences.

24.7

No verse in this book can keep that body living.
The tenderness of remembrance has another task:
to turn us towards the teaching while we can hear,
towards care while we can give it,
towards the path while there is time to walk.

[DN16 · The Great Discourse on the Buddha’s Extinguishment](#)

Book VI · 25. What was carried onwards

25.1

The Mallas honoured the body.
Relics were shared,
and places of remembrance arose.
The roads would carry pilgrims
as they had once carried those seeking the living teacher.

25.2

The monastic tradition remembers an assembly:
Upāli recounting discipline,
Ānanda recounting discourses,
companions listening together
to preserve what had been received.

25.3

The teachings would pass through many lands and languages.
The history would be long,
its communities varied,
its acts of preservation repeated
by people whose own lives would also end.

25.4

A voice becomes silent.
Another learns the words.
A hand can no longer turn the page.
Another opens the book
and gives the reading its attention.

25.5

So gratitude can become a form of keeping:
keeping a source faithfully,
keeping a promise to learn,
keeping a place welcoming
for someone who has yet to arrive.

25.6

The Three Refuges can be spoken again.
The precepts can be undertaken again.
Goodwill can be cultivated again.
The life we remember has ended;
the practice is present work.

DN16 · The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment

PLI-TV-KD21 · 1. The origin story of the communal recitation

KP1 · The Three Refuges

Book VI · 26. For the one opening this book

26.1

You may come to this reading with confidence.
You may come with questions.
You may have carried the word Buddha since childhood,
or be meeting the teaching
with little more than a willingness to listen.

26.2

You may arrive tired.
You may have made a mistake you have not yet repaired.
You may be grieving someone
whose name still changes the room
when another person says it.

26.3

Let there be room to begin from where you are.
Read a passage carefully.
Ask what it means.
Seek a teacher who can help you understand.
Allow practice to grow through what is actually possible.

26.4

The lotus image can accompany that beginning.
There are different depths in the pool.
You do not need to declare yourself awakened
to take the teaching seriously,
or to perform certainty in order to ask a question.

26.5

Try a little less harm in the next encounter.
Try an honest word spoken with care.
Try giving attention to the person before you.
Let these small acts be small,
and let them be done.

26.6

The Buddha's life is worthy of remembrance.
Your own life is where remembrance can become conduct.
The next person who meets you
may never know which verse you read,
and may still receive something good from it.

SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity

KP9 · The Discourse on Love

Book VI · 27. A blessing for the road

27.1

May this reading leave the heart more willing to care.

May what has been understood become useful.

May what remains uncertain

be met with patience,

good questions and honest learning.

27.2

May those who feel unseen

meet someone who gives them attention.

May those who are afraid find protection.

May those who are ill receive care.

May those who care for others receive care in turn.

27.3

May a child find a patient teacher.

May an older person find time and companionship.

May a stranger be met with dignity.

May a person who has caused harm

turn towards restraint and repair.

27.4

May our devotion make us attentive

to the person who needs water,

the companion who needs rest,

the question that deserves an answer,

and the work that kindness asks us to do.

27.5

Even as a mother would protect with her life
her child, her only child,
so too for all creatures
unfold a boundless heart.

CANONICAL EXCERPT · KP9 · Bhikkhu Sujato · CCO

KP9 · The Discourse on Love

27.6

May there be good in our beginnings:
an intention we can honour.
May there be good in our continuing:
patience, courage and correction.
May our practice turn towards the ending of suffering.

27.7

For those who still have dust in their eyes,
may there be a chance to hear.
For those who hear,
may there be a chance to understand.
For those who understand, may there be the willingness to
practise.

27.8

The book rests now in the reader's hands.
Beyond it, a day is waiting.
May we go into that day with care.
May what we have received
become something good that another person receives.

KP9 · The Discourse on Love

SN6.1 · The Appeal of the Divinity

PLI-TV-KD1 · The great chapter

Sources and colophon

This literary edition draws chiefly on the Pāli discourses and Vinaya. It is an arrangement of episodes from several sources, not a translation of one ancient biography. Traditional wonders are presented as features of the received accounts. Interior imagery and the poem’s contemporary applications are literary reflection. Exact dates are not invented for the teaching-year episodes.

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The appeal concerning beings with little dust in their eyes is spoken by Brahmā Sahampati in SN 6.1. The lotus image belongs to the Buddha’s compassionate survey of the world; the declaration opening the doors to freedom from death is the Buddha’s response. The mission to teach for the welfare of many appears in Vinaya Khandhaka 1. These voices are distinguished in the surrounding poetry.

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