

Annotations to *The Treasury of the Jewels of Good Sayings*

CHAPTER ONE

Verse 1.

The highest gods are Indra and Brahmā, etc. The rulers of the Nāgas are Nanda and Upananda. The Vidyādhara [Knowledge Holders] are Jīmū-ta-vāhana, etc. Vyāsa is the composer of the *Mahabharata*, Vālmīki the composer of the *Ramayana*. Akṣapāda is the founder of the Nyāya system.

Verse 2.

Although the *Good Sayings* mainly discuss the accomplishment of worldly goals, when one reflects upon them one realizes that they do not contradict [the supramundane nature of] Dharma practice.

Verse 4.

The intelligent one is skillful about what should or should not be done by a person lacking in good qualities. For example, in ancient times in India, there was a monkey who was the king's guard. One night, while the king was sleeping, a thief entered the king's bedroom and saw the king's monkey-guard ready to strike a snake that was resting on the king's body. However, the thief thought, "If this lord of the people dies, it will cause tremendous turmoil for the country. Although, I shall be caught in the act of stealing it does not matter if I am punished. But I must protect the king from being killed or injured." When the thief thwarted the monkey it made a loud noise, which awoke the king. When asked what happened, the thief told the whole story. The king, pleased with the thief's straightforwardness and desire to save his life, gave him a reward.

Verse 5.

The owl is called the ghost bird, as it comes out at night, just like a ghost.

Verse 6.

Wise people can remove evils, but fools cannot. There was, in ancient India, a king who had been looking for an intelligent young man to appoint as minister. He gave a mule to a family to raise. He also arranged to have the mule stolen back by his people. The king then sent a message to the family saying that he was coming to get the mule. The householder was very concerned over the king wanting the mule returned, but he had an intelligent son who told his father not to worry. As the king was approaching the family's home he saw the son riding a person pretending to be a horse. The king asked him what he was doing. The boy answered, "I am taming my father." The king answered, "But a father ought to be respected." "Should only my own father be respected or shouldn't anyone who is a father?" "Anyone who is a father should be respected," said the king. Then the boy brought a donkey to the king and said, "In that case the father of the lost mule is this donkey. Please accept him." The king was pleased with the boy's intelligence and had him appointed as minister.

Verse 7.

Though people of great wisdom become poor, their understanding waxes strong. Once upon a time in India there was a king who appointed a fisherman as his minister. The fisherman was ungrateful. He had the king assassinated and expelled the two young princes from the country. After pronouncing himself king of the country, he then asked a certain wise man to become his

minister. But, the wise man turned down his request, saying, "You are notorious for killing your king! How could I be minister to such an ungrateful person." The king then imprisoned the wise man, and again asked him to become minister. But the wise man adamantly refused to accept the post. Finally, the king told him, "You are learned and wise. It would be a great loss to kill you. Therefore, I shall expel you from this country."

When the wise man went in exile, he spotted the two princes playing among a group of children. He pretended his own lap was a royal lion throne, and he placed the older prince on it and consecrated him as a king. When this young king grew up, he fought against the notorious king, and killed him in revenge for killing his father. The young king gathered his retinue together—including the wise man as his prime minister—and returned to his country. There, he re-established a set of good laws with which to rule his kingdom.

Verse 13.

Once upon a time, in the city of Ujjayinī, there was a poor man named Cūḍin who lived with his mother. Although he wanted to be a rich man, his goat was his only property. At that time, there was a well known thief living in that city. Cūḍin wanted to fool the thief into giving him some of money. Therefore, Cūḍin pretended to be a rich man and stayed in an expensive hotel. The thief thought that he was a very rich man. That night, the thief made a hole in the wall of the room where Cūḍin was staying and entered the room in order to steal from him. As the thief came through the hole in the wall, Cūḍin was lying awake, waiting to catch him. Cūḍin told the thief "My goat is my only property, You are even trying to steal from a poor man like me! I am going to take you to the king to punish you for stealing!" The thief, who was afraid of being brought before the king, gave Cūḍin many gold coins to dissuade him from turning him in. Cūḍin eagerly accepted the gold coins and agreed not to bring the thief before the king.

Then the Cūḍin prepared to go to another place because he thought that the thief might be planning to steal back his coins. Before departing on his journey Cūḍin covered his coins with leaves and fed them to his goat. On the way, he stayed at a stranger's house. There, he squeezed his goat, and the goat vomited up the gold coins. The owner of the house saw this and asked what happened. Cūḍin said, "This is a precious wish-fulfilling goat!" The greedy house owner insisted that Cūḍin sell the goat to him. Finally, Cūḍin agreed to sell the goat for a lot of gold coins.

Then, Cūḍin travelled through a thick forest fearing that someone might rob him of all his gold. He encountered a bear who tried to attack him. Cūḍin struggled with all his might and was able to grasp the two ears of the bear, but his coins became scattered all over the place. Because of Cūḍin's luck, the prince of Mathura suddenly arrived at just that spot for a picnic. He asked Cūḍin, "What are you doing?" Cūḍin replied, "You impeded my practice of meditating upon the deity of wealth in the form of a bear! Don't you see the rain of gold coins on the ground? Now if you want to practice it you can do it!" The prince, who was greedy, offered Cūḍin his clothes, princely ornaments, and horse. Then, the prince asked Cūḍin to permit him to perform meditation upon the deity of wealth in the form of a bear. Cūḍin handed the bear's two ears to the prince, whispered some spells in his ears that he should recite, and instructed the prince to hold onto the bear's ears very tightly until there is a shower of gold coins. Then, Cūḍin gathered all the gold coins from ground, dressed in the princely robes, mounted the horse, and quickly rode away.

Cūḍin rode onward until he arrived at Vārānaśī where he met the householder whom he deceitfully sold the goat. The householder took Cūḍin to the King of Varanasi to sue Cūḍin for

deceiving him. The king handed Cūḍin over to the householder for punishment. The householder wished to throw Cūḍin into the Ganges River for deceiving him and robbing him of the gold coins. He and his companions stuffed Cūḍin into a box and took it to throw in the river. On the way, they put the box down and asked a cowherd to watch it as they went for a drink of water. Mean-while, the cowherd opened the box and saw Cūḍin. “What are you doing in there?” said the cowherd. “I am a prince who wanted to go to forest to practice meditation, but my people wanted me to remain in my country! If you want to become king, crawl into the box and remain quietly inside until the people place this box on the king’s lion throne. The cowherd was so greedy to become the king that he immediately crawled into the box. When the householder and his companions came back and lifted up the box up, one of them said, “What happened? It feels lighter than before!” Another said, “It is normal that when people drink water and rest, they feel the load lighter!”

After a few days, Cūḍin dressed in his princely robes, and went to visit the householder. Cūḍin said, “You were very kind to throw me into the Ganges! The Nāgas received me, entertained me, and gave me lots of riches!” Believing him, the greedy householder also wanted to go the Nāga’s place. Cūḍin told him “You have to go there the same way that I went!” Cūḍin placed the householder in a box and threw it into the Ganges. Then Cūḍin slandered the Vārānasī King to the Mathura King and he was able to have the Vārānasī King killed as revenge for handing him over to the householder for punishment. In the end, Cūḍin himself became the king of Vārānasī.

Verse 19.

Viṣṇu is also known as Yellow Garbed. Once upon a time, Yellow Garbed fought a longstanding battle with Garuḍa and was defeated. Yellow Garbed, wishing to control Garuḍa, he asked to negotiate with him. Yellow Garbed visited Garuḍa and said, “I am so pleased at how you have defeated others. Please ask for a boon from me.” Garuḍa said to Yellow Garbed, “How can such a great one [as I] receive a boon from a lesser one [like you]? You should be receiving the boon [from me!].” Then, Yellow Garbed said to Garuḍa, “In that case, may you become my vehicle!” Ever since then, Garuḍa has been the vehicle of the Yellow-Garbed Viṣṇu.

Verse 20.

Sutasoma was a bodhisattva and Sudāsa was a king, who became a devourer of human flesh as a result of his previous actions (karma). This story appears in Vinaya literature, the Jātaka stories of Ārya Śūrya, the commentary on the *Treasury of Good Sayings* by dMar ston, as well as other literary works in the bKa’ gyur and bsTan gyur collections.

Once upon a time, there was a man named Sudāsa who had been eating the flesh of small children for twelve years. Eventually, the people caught him; just as they were about to kill him, he immediately uttered the aspirational prayer, “May I become a powerful monster!” By the power of this prayer, he became a very powerful monster! He invited other monsters to feast upon a meal of five hundred kings. When the monsters had gathered 499 kings, and needed only one more, Sudāsa and his retinue went to catch Sutasoma who was at a picnic. Finally, one monster caught him. Sudāsa saw that king Sutasoma was sad. Sudāsa said to him, “I heard that you are hero, but now I find that you are nervous and sad.” Sutasoma said to Sudāsa, “I am not nervous and sad because I have been caught by you, but because I am going to die without fulfilling my promise to give a gift to a mendicant.” Sudāsa said to him, “In that case, go home

for a week, and, when you return to my home, offer me your body to eat." Sutasoma went to his home and made a good gift to the mendicant. After a week, he went to Sudāsa's home to offer himself to the monster. Sudāsa saw that he was very happy and bright, and became curious. He asked Sutasoma, "Why are you so cheerful if you are about to die?" Sutasoma told Sudāsa, "I gave a good gift to the mendicant and he was so delighted that he gave me a teaching on life's impermanence. Now you can eat me! Don't delay your feast!" Upon hearing of the teaching of life's impermanence, Sudāsa changed his mind, bowed down to Sutasoma, and listened to his teaching. As a result, his mind became pacified, and in this way, Prince Sutasoma tamed Sudāsa. They met throughout many lifetimes until Prince Sutasoma became the Buddha and Sudāsa became Aṅgulimāla.

Verse 27.

Verses similar in meaning to this verse are found in the *Pañca Tantra* and the *Prajñādaṇḍa* of Nāgārjuna. In this story, a lion, the king of the beasts, used to kill many beasts every day. One day all the beasts gathered and asked the lion, "You kill many beasts every day, even if one animal is enough for your meal! Would it not be better if one animal from among us came to you each day to offer itself up as your meal?" The lion was agreeable to this proposal.

One day a rabbit on his way to feed the lion saw a deep well. All of a sudden he got an idea how to kill the lion and free all the beasts from becoming his meal. The rabbit showed up at the lion's den very late, and by the time he arrived the lion was very hungry and angry as well. The lion asked him "Why are you so late?" The rabbit said, "On the way, I was caught by another powerful lion who wanted to eat me! When I told him that I had to go to the great lion king of beasts, he became very angry to learn that there was another lion in this forest. He exclaimed, "I am the king of the beasts. Bring me [the one who claims to be] the king of the beasts in my forest." Then the rabbit said, "I promised to bring you. Won't you please come with me?" The rabbit took the lion to the water tank and showed him what was his own reflection in its water. The lion seeing the reflection jumped in, thinking by doing that to kill his adversary. But, he never returned. Thus, the rabbit was successful in his effort.

CHAPTER TWO

Verse 16.

A father once told his son, "You rely upon and associate with bad people. Instead you should rely upon and associate with good people." The father died. In order to examine his father's words, the young man came to rely upon a king through working for him and befriended a [greedy] man. One day the king and young man went to hunt tigers in the forest. The king was caught by a tiger and almost killed, but the young man fought off the tiger and killed it. The king was appreciative of that and expressed his gratitude.

The king had a parrot as his play companion. The man stole it and hid it, but he told his friend, "I killed the royal parrot and ate it." When the king announced he would reward anyone who gave him news about his parrot, the [greedy] man told the king that the parrot was killed by the young man. The king summoned the youth and asked him, "Did you kill my parrot?" The young man said, "Yes, I killed it." The king told him he would punish him, but the young man reminded him, "You owe me kindness and gratitude for saving your life! I once saved you from being eaten by a tiger!" The king said, "Nonsense! How can I consider a servant's service to his master as a kindness?"

The man understanding what kind of a person the king was, brought back the royal parrot.

He then abandoned the king and the greedy friend that informed on him to obtain the reward.

The young man went to another country. He came to rely upon a king by working for him and married a woman. One day the king and the young man went to a desert for a picnic. There was no water, the king was dying of thirst. The young man went to search for food and brought back three juicy fruits to the king, saving the king's life. Sometime later, the young man took the prince somewhere and hid him. The young man told his wife, "I killed the prince." Thereafter, the king announced that he would reward whomever brought him news of his son. The young man's wife was greedy for the reward and told the king that her husband killed the prince. The king summoned the young man and asked him, "Did you kill my son?" The young man said "Yes, I did." The king decreed that the young man be executed. But, the young man challenged the king's decree by saying, "Just a minute! You owe me kindness for I saved your life in the desert." The king remembered the young man's kindness in saving his life. Therefore, the king told the young man, "Of course! Although my son is very precious to me, you saved my life by bringing me three juicy fruits in the desert, Therefore, for the first fruit, I free you from being executed. For the second fruit I will give you my daughter in marriage. And for the third fruit, I shall grant you half of my kingdom." Then, the young man returned the prince to the king and said, "My lord, how can I accept your gifts? I am merely your servant! I do not need all these rewards." The king appointed this young man as his minister and the young man served the king honestly for the rest of his life.

Verse 18.

Though a great person may become weak for a short time, don't worry about that! Prince Puṇyārtha's story is found in the *Damamūkasūtra* and in the Vinaya in the bKa' agyur collection. In the story, there are two royal brothers, named Puṇyārtha and Pāpārtha. They both go to the ocean to find a wish-fulfilling jewel. On the way, Prince Pāpārtha pierces Prince Puṇyārtha's eyes [with a thorn], blinding the prince. Pāpārtha returned home and tells the others that Prince Puṇyārtha died in a shipwreck. Despite being blinded, Prince Puṇyārtha does not lose his determination, and earns his livelihood playing music and singing.

Eventually he returns home together with his wife, asks for his brother Pāpārtha, and forgives him his sin. A more complete version of the story is given in Geshe Wangyal's *Door of Liberation* (New York: Lotsawa, 1978, pp. 60 – 70, or in the Snow Lion edition, 1995, pp. 65 – 77).

Verse 19.

A long time ago, before there were kings in the world, people became lawless, stealing from one another. Then, a good man arose, protecting people from others' lawless activities. Because of his honesty and enthusiasm to help people, he was chosen king of the people and became known as Saṃmitīya in Sanskrit and Mang pos bkur ba in Tibetan. You can find this story in the Vinaya literature of Tog bKa' 'gur, vol. ga, f. 360b.

CHAPTER THREE

Verse 6.

A fox went to search for food in the countryside. He accidentally fell into a pot containing paint. After struggling to get out, the tips of his hair became dyed the beautiful color of [yellow] sesame flowers. At that time, the animals were looking for a king. When they saw this yellow-colored fox, they agreed to enthrone him as their king. He appointed a lion as his minister and rode on him wherever he traveled. Although the animals served him well, he always became angry with them.

He especially caused trouble for the fox clans. When the fox king began suppressing and torturing the animals, they examined him carefully and found him to be nothing but an ordinary fox. Then, the entire animal community ridiculed him. The lion slapped his head and he died instantly.

Verse 14.

Balī was the king of the demigods. At one time, he controlled the whole world and troubled everyone. At that time, Viṣṇu visited him in a guise of a dwarf. Visnu asked Balī for the amount of land that he could cover in one footstep in order to build a hermitage. Balī did not think before he spoke and told him “What is the use of one step? Take three steps instead of one!” Then Viṣṇu transformed himself and assumed a gigantic form. He planted his left foot on the earth, and, with his first footstep, planted his right foot atop Mount Sumeru! Then he asked Balī “Where shall the next two steps go?” As a consequence, Balī was embarrassed and retreated to the underground. It is a story.

Verse 29.

In ancient times, many rabbits dwelled in a thick forest. A herd of elephants came there on their way to the lake for a drink of water. They crushed the rabbits’ nests. The rabbits held a meeting to decide what to do about this dangerous situation. There was an intelligent rabbit among them that said, “If all of you try to lift me into a tree, I will talk to the elephants.” The herd of rabbits lifted the intelligent rabbit up into a tree, and, when the elephants arrived, the rabbit in a tree said to the elephants, “Listen to me!” The elephants looked up and said, “Who are you and who sent you here?” The rabbit said, “I am the moon’s messenger! The moon says that if you cause the rabbit clan trouble, it will cause hot sand to rain upon you! The moon is speaking through me to you. Don’t harm me!” The elephants consulted with each other and then said to the rabbit, “You are the moon’s messenger! How could we harm you?” Then, the rabbit descended from the tree on an elephant’s head. When he pointed out the shining moon to the elephants, he said, “The moon is pleased with this agreement. Now you can go to your own homes.” From this time onward, the rabbits have lived happily ever after without being harmed by the elephants.

Verse 35.

In this verse the word “bya rog” (crow) appears to be a corruption of the word “bya gag” (goose). The word bya gag is defined as “a kind of water bird whose claws are connected with thin fleshy webs (Tib. skyi mo). They appear in a story about a drying lake where two geese and a tortoise lived. Because the lake was drying up, the two geese wanted to go to another lake. They told the tortoise their plan. The tortoise asked the geese, “Would you please take me along with you?” They responded, “We will fly, but how will you go?” The tortoise answered, “I have a plan, I will clench a stick in my mouth, each of you grab one end of the stick, and we will fly together.” The geese said that it would be possible, but that they did not believe that the tortoise could keep his mouth shut! “ The tortoise retorted, “That is not so! I will be quiet.” So they began their journey, with the geese holding the ends of the stick and the tortoise clenching the stick in the middle. A group of children saw this extraordinary event and shouted, “A tortoise is being carried by two geese!” The tortoise could not help but reply, “It is my own plan!” As soon as he spoke, he fell to the earth and was tortured by the children’s play. This story is in the Vinaya literature and is also paraphrased by Akya Yongs ‘dzin in the commentary to the dGe ldan Lega bshad, (*Good Saying of the dGe lugs pa*). f. 7a.

CHAPTER FOUR

Verse 15.

There were once two friends. One sold charcoal while the other sold sandalwood. Every evening, when they got together, they talked about business. The charcoal sold daily, but the sandalwood never sold. The sandalwood seller then thought to himself, "If I were to make this sandalwood look like charcoal, it would sell better." He then burned up the precious sandalwood to make it look like charcoal, and got nothing for it.

Verse 16.

Wise people have self-reflection, but fools just imitate celebrities. An example of this appears in the following story, which is popular in Buddhist literature: Once upon a time, six rabbits lived in a forest. A piece of wood fell into a lake, making a huge splash that frightened the six rabbits, and they ran away. A fox saw them running and asked, "What happened?" The rabbits said, "Splashing!" and the fox began to run with them, Soon deer, bears, tigers, and all the beasts were following along.

Finally, a lion seeing them running asked, "What is *splashing*?" But, no one knew what it was! Then, they all went together to see what *splashing* was. On the surface of the lake, they saw, a piece of wood, but nothing else. Thus, the lion freed all the beasts from the fear of *splashing*.

This story is still used in Tibet to help people who are afraid without reason or without knowing the cause of their fear. It is known as "How Splashing Frightened the Rabbits."

Verse 29.

In a remote place there was a rat called Rich Rat. He had a very precious stone. By its mysterious power Rich Rat was able to successfully steal things. One time, however, someone took his precious stone away. As a consequence, Rich Rat lost his ability to steal things. He became depressed and went into exile. As to what then happened to him, we don't exactly know.

CHAPTER FIVE

Verse 1.

The owl is also known as the monster bird as well as the ghost bird (see chapter one, verse 5). Once upon a time the monster bird arrived at the mansion of Indra, king of the gods, and made some sounds. The gods said, "This kind of sound is a bad omen. Kill him!" But the owl said, "I have good news, please wait." The gods replied, "Tell us your good news." He began by saying, "I, along with others, such as 'Friend of Wealth,' 'Great Intellect,' 'Good Throat,' 'Pleasant Voice,' and 'High Throat' are the pleasant voices of the world." Speaking in this way, he tricked them and flew off.

Verse 2.

Wicked people first beguile you with their words, and if you don't watch out, they'll eventually deceive you. There was an old, aging heron who lost his ability to hunt fish. He remained pensively at a bank of a river. A fish asked him, "Why do you look so sad?" The heron replied, "This lake will soon dry up and all of you will also die, Then I will have nothing to eat. Therefore, I worry about all of you! There is a good lake in the distance. If you wish to go to there, I will take all of you to that lake one by one." Every day he took one fish and ate it on a flat stone in the distance. One day the heron was carrying a crab. The crab saw a heap of fish bones and thought, "This heron is deceitful. He killed all the fish that he said he was taking to another lake." So the crab said, "Uncle, where is the lake?" The heron replied, "Little crab,

prepare to die, there is no such lake! This is the way that I tricked all the fish and ate them!" The crab bit the heron's neck very hard and killed him. Though the crab was small, his courage and energy saved him and all other fishes in the lake.

Verse 5.

Once upon a time there was a deceitful man who had a donkey. Because the grass was so scarce, he put a leopard skin on the donkey and released it into other's fields. The people shouted, "Leopard in the field!" when they saw a leopard eating grass. However, when they looked more carefully, they found that it was a donkey. Then, the angry people killed it.

Verse 6.

Once upon a time in India, a young brahman priest was carrying a goat to a certain place in order to worship a god. A gang of five thieves saw his goat and wanted to steal it. So they divided themselves up and went to five different places. Each time the brahman encountered one of the thieves unknowingly, he heard them say, "A brahman is carrying a dog. To think, such an occasion exists in the world!" After hearing this same speech a couple of times, the brahman boy thinking that it must be a dog after all and not a goat gave up the goat the next time he encountered one of the thieves and went away. The thieves, succeeding in their conspiracy, went home with the goat.

Verse 7.

In ancient times in India, there was a rich family without a child. The family prayed to their deity for a child. Soon, they begot a child and named him Mahadeva. In order to hold a big feast in honor of the child's birth, the father went to ocean to find gold, etc. However, it took him twelve years to return! Waiting for the father to return, the child grew up and fell in love with his mother due to the result of karma. When the time came for the father to arrive, the boy's mother badly advised him to assassinate his father. The boy foolishly killed his father.

Sometime thereafter, the mother had a sexual relationship with another man. When Mahadeva found out he got very angry and confused, and killed his mother too. A saint who had been Mahadeva's teacher used to come to his home. Mahadeva thought, "This man will tell others that I killed my parents." And so he murdered this saint, as well.

Owing to his evil actions, Mahadeva grew depressed and did not feel comfortable living in his home, So he went to Magadha. At that time, there was a famine. By living as a lay person, it was difficult to procure enough food. However, Mahadeva observed that it was easier to acquire food living in the guise of a monk. So, he gathered saffron-coloured clothes in charnel ground and put them on. Without joining the abbot or the other monks, he begged for alms in the cities and villages. Because of his evil actions, he always looked down. When he gave a religious teaching to cowherds and others, everyone thought he was a true practitioner.

One night, remembering all his evil actions [his sexual relationship with his mother, committing patricide and matricide, killing the saint, dressing as a monk without ordination, and pretending to be a saint], he cried out and lamented. His disciples asked him, "Why did you cry out so loudly last night? He said again, "Alas, there is suffering, the causes of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering." In that way, he deceived his disciples. Eventually when he died, he accepted that he would be reborn in hell for all of his evil actions.

Verse 9.

A deceitful man was selling meat. He showed others a deer's tail. When people saw this, they believed that he was selling deer meat and asked for some. However, he sold them donkey meat. This verse shows us that there are many types of people. Beware of these kind of people.

Verse 11.

In ancient times, there was a country named Kanchi. Traditionally, when the king died, his eldest son succeeded. However, any of the princes able to assassinate the king could beat the victory drum and become king.

Verse 15.

A man had a peacock that could dance. Over time, his peacock lost its feathers. So, the man cut the peacock's crest of feathers and placed them on the spot where the peacock formerly had its tail feathers. It didn't work and people called him "crazy."

Verse 17.

The wicked cause mischief especially for the virtuous, peaceful person. Once there was a good buffalo and a bad monkey in a forest. The nasty monkey used to climb on the buffalo's back and do mischievous things. Since the buffalo was gentle and peaceful, he did not respond to the monkey's mischievousness. But the deities of the forest seeing the monkey's bad behaviour, took him off the buffalo's back, and made him promise not to harm the peaceful animal.

Verse 25.

When the Lord Buddha was alive, the great physician Kumara Jivaka told venerable Ananda, "Lord Buddha had a body strong as a diamond; therefore, offer twelve pounds of medicine to the Lord. Except for the Lord Buddha, don't give that much to anyone else."

When Ananda offered that amount of medicine to the Lord, Devadatta said, "I also need twelve pounds of medicine. There's no difference between me and Gautama, the mendicant." So, he took twelve pounds of medicine, but he could not digest the medicine, became ill, and almost died. He told a physician about his illness. The physician said, "There is no way to cure an illness caused by not being able to digest medicine."

Then, Lord Buddha placed his hand on the Devadatta's head and blessed him. After that, Devadatta was cured of his illness. He said, "Gautama the mendicant also has a good understanding of medicine. He won't have to die of hunger when he reaches old age." Devadatta was not grateful for the Buddha's healing true words.

Verse 26.

In ancient times, a lion and a fox lived together in the forest. The fox ate much of the flesh from animals that the lion killed. One time, the body of an elephant killed by the lion was lying on the ground. The lion told the fox, "Carry the flesh of this elephant." The fox seeking to trick the lion said, "I cannot do both jobs at once, O Lord. Would you do one?" The lion responded, "What two jobs?" The fox replied, "One is carrying flesh in the lead position, while the other is walking behind making cooing sounds." The lion thought, "To stay behind cooing after a fox is not a job worthy of me." Therefore, he decided to carry the elephant's flesh at the front of the line. The fox followed behind him cooing, and thought, "This is the sound of pure enjoyment."

Verse 28.

Place confidence in no one without careful reflection, and give advice to no one. A long time ago in India, a man went to search for his lost cow. Not having anything to eat or drink for several

days, he became exhausted and almost died. Because he was so hungry and weak, when he went to pick some fruit from a tree at the edge of precipice, because the fruit was so heavy, he fell into a deep abyss, along with a few of the tree's branches. A kind monkey heard a [human] voice rising up out of the deep abyss and looking down, saw the man almost dead down there. The monkey, jumping into the abyss, carried the man out. The trustworthy monkey told the man, "I am tired and need to rest. Meanwhile, would you protect us both from other predatory beasts?" Then, the monkey fell asleep. The ungrateful man thought, "I am so weak! I will kill this monkey and eat its meat to nourish me." So he threw a big stone on the monkey. Yet somehow, the monkey was miraculously prevented from injury. The monkey awoke and said to the man, "What happened?" The man was so embarrassed that he looked down. No one else was there besides the two of them and the monkey understood the man's intention. Filled with even more compassion for the man, the monkey took the man to the edge of the forest and said to him, "Don't waste your precious leisure and opportunity, but instead practice goodness." Then the monkey returned to his forest.

According to dMar ston, this story also applies for verse 38.

Verse 38.

Even when they are close friends, do not place trust in bad-natured people who prize wealth. Long ago, there was a golden-coloured deer who was a bodhi-sattva. He saw a hunter being carried away by the strong current of river. Feeling compassion for the hunter, the deer rescued the hunter from the river. The hunter said, "Thank you for being so very kind to me! Would you please come to my home?" The deer replied, "You are a human being, and I am a deer. We have different life styles, If you really want to return my kindness, please don't tell anyone where I live." Upon returning to his village, the hunter heard that the king had just made the following request: "I will reward anyone who can tell me where in the forest lives the golden-coloured deer that I saw in a dream." The hunter, desiring the king's reward, immediately forgot the deer's kindness and his request not to reveal his whereabouts. He took the king to the spot where he was rescued by the golden-coloured deer. Just as the king was about to shoot, the deer cried out in human language, "Wait! Who told you where I live?" The king pointed to the man who was rescued by the deer. The deer saw the man looking down, embarrassed. The king asked "What happened?" When the king heard how the deer rescued the hunter, he wanted to punish the hunter. The deer, who felt even more compassion for the hunter, asked the king not to punish him, and said "This happened to me because of my own karmic actions."

It seems dMar ston took this story from the *Jātakamālā*, ch. 26.

Verse 40.

When all the birds assembled looking for a king, some looked at the owl and said, "This one is very bright, has good night vision and horns on his head. Therefore, he would be a worthy candidate as our king." Then, the crow said, "What did you say? The owl's feet are full of cracks, his eyes are greasy, his voice is unpleasant, and the horns on his head are a bad omen! I do not understand why you wish to elect the owl as our king." Saying this, the crow went away. All the birds accepted the crow's reasons for not choosing the owl as their king. Turning away from the owl, the birds dispersed. Since that time, [for over an aeon], the crow and the owl have been enemies.

CHAPTER SIX

Verse 25.

Long ago, the birds were looking for a king. They decided that the one who saw the sun rise first would become king of the birds. The bat and pigeon were able to see the sun rising first. The bat had the pigeon cram flour into his mouth, making him unable to speak. When the birds saw how the bat deceived the pigeon, they did not appoint the bat as their king. So they decided that whoever reached the highest point in sky would become their king. When the bat heard this, he hid among the feathers of the vulture. When the vulture claimed, "I reached the highest of point in the sky!" the bat replied, "I reached a higher point in the sky than you, (for I was hidden in your feathers)!" Hearing the bat, all the birds told him, "You don't have feathers, but horns and an ugly complexion! Therefore, you cannot even be considered a bird! Needless to say, you cannot become the king of the birds."

Verse 54.

The Kaurava Princes and the Pandava brothers are the protagonists of the *Mahābhārata*, which was composed by the sage Vyāsa. These stories from the *Mahābhārata* are of great interest to many Tibetan poets. In his commentary to the *Treasury of Good Sayings*, dMar ston wrote a small folio, 66b to 77a, summarizing this particular story as follows:

The sage Vyāsa [according to dMar ston but actually Vichitravirya] had two wives. With his wife from the warrior caste he had a son named Paṇḍu and with his wife from the brahmin caste he had a son named Dhṛtarāṣṭra. At this time Paṇḍu was ruling the kingdom. Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not have any sons. His father, Vyāsa [sic], wanting him to have sons prayed, "May you have one hundred sons." Instead Dhṛtarāṣṭra's wife gave birth to a lump of meat. Dhṛtarāṣṭra visited his father and told him, "Instead of one hundred sons, my wife gave a birth to a lump of meat." Vyāsa [sic] replied, "It will turn into one hundred sons." By cutting the lump of meat into one hundred pieces, one hundred sons were born. Then a soothsayer told Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his wife, "These one hundred sons have ominous signs. If you don't kill them quickly, they will be very harmful to your clan, and your family lineage will be cut off." Their mother said, "Although they have ominous signs, they are my sons and I would not dare kill them."

Prince Paṇḍu also did not have any sons. With his two wives, Madri and Kunti, he went to a forest. While in the forest he mistakenly shot a deer that was actually a sage in disguise. The dying sage cursed him, "May you die when you have sexual relations with your wife. This is your punishment as a result of shooting me while I was having sexual relations with my wife." Because of this curse, Pandu refrained from having sex with any of his wives for many years. In order not to cut off the lineage, the two wives gave birth to five sons that were conceived with five different divine persons. Arjuna was one of these sons, who were called the Paṇḍavas. Eventually, when Paṇḍu was having sex with Madri, lightning struck him as a result of the sage's curse and he immediately died. Madri told Kunti, "My three sons and your two sons should be raised together," and then Madri jumped into Paṇḍu's funeral pyre.

Thus Kuntī and the Paṇḍavas went to their royal palace and lived there receiving the respect of the people. The Kauravas then thought, "These Paṇḍavas will take our possessions and properties, so we should destroy them right now with a trick." They made a small house of shellac for the Paṇḍavas and told them they and their mother should live there. When the Paṇḍavas and their mother were inside the house, the Kauravas set the house on fire.

The Paṇḍavas and their mother fortunately escaped from the burning house unharmed, and went to live in exile. The sons married a woman, with whom they alternatively slept with. When their wife had a son with Bhīmasena, he became the nephew of the other four Paṇḍavas.

Now, in their family there were eight members. They were enjoying their lives, but the Kauravas challenged them to fight. With the help of Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas fought against the Kauravas and were able to conquer the Kauravas's twelve armies. After defeating them, the Pāṇḍavas, primarily Yudhiṣṭhira, ruled over the land of Kuru.

Verse 57.

There was a country called Gauḍa in eastern India, and in that kingdom there was a king named Ramapala. One time he called all his subjects together and said, "Surround the ocean and make a war in order to subjugate the island dwellers." His decree caused the ocean to be bound. After a while, a lady possessing beautiful ornaments said to the King of Gauḍa, "My Lord, you bound the ocean. Please release it." The Gauḍa King said, "I did not bind it! When did I bind it?" The lady replied, "The time when you said, 'Bind the ocean and make a war,' you bound the ocean." The king responded, "Then release the ocean." After saying that, the ocean was released. This is a well-known story.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Verse 21.

Once upon a time, a fox was roaming the countryside looking for food, when he saw two tough sheep fighting each other whose heads were bleeding. When the fox went to lick some of the blood from their wounds, he unfortunately was trapped between them and his head was smashed into a hundred pieces. So it has been told.

Verse 23.

Once upon a time Good Wing, king of the owls, and Country Protector, king of the crows, were enemies. The owl army and the crow army had fought for a long time and their battles were never-ending.

The owls had a minister named Golden Eye and the crows had a minister named Possessing the Power of Clouds. The minister to the crow king thought of a plan. "It is difficult for us to conquer the owl army. We tried to negotiate with them, but they were not agreeable. Now we'll have to trick them. All of you should notch my feathers, cut my limbs, and then leave me behind and go away." His friends did as he said. When the owls came and saw the crow minister in bad shape, they asked him what happened. The crow minister told them, "Although, I wanted to negotiate with you, my own crows would not cooperate. They tortured me, cut up my limbs, and notched my feathers." The owl king believed the crow minister when he spoke that way.

The king of owls had the crow minister brought to his palace. The owl minister asked the king not to bring the crow minister to the palace, but the king did not listen. Since the owl minister could not agree with his king, he went away.

The king asked the crow's minister to help him. He said, "You are intelligent. You can help me make this palace more comfortable." The crow's minister rebuilt the palace with wood, plaster, and smooth cow dung. The owl palace looked beautiful. When the crow minister had become trusted by the owl king and his retinue, he sent a message to his species, "Everyone of you should bring a burning torch." Then the crows brought torches and burned up all the owls' nests, and the owls all perished in the blaze. It is said that nowadays all owls are descendants of the owl's minister, Golden Eye.

Verse 26.

Taḍibha was a small bird whose nest lay close to the seashore. One time, the ocean waves came crashing down upon the shoreline and destroyed the nest with its little eggs in it. The small bird told the other birds what happened. They said, "How can we protect ourselves from the sea? We cannot do anything!" All the birds then cried out noisily to Garuḍa, king of birds, "Don't you see how the great ocean does so much damage to the bird clan?" Hearing this tumultuous noise, Garuḍa got very angry and, in revenge, began destroying all Nāgas who inhabit the sea. Then Garuda, the ocean, and the birds negotiated an agreement to allow birds to build their nests where the waves of the sea would not reach.

Verse 30.

All the Indian deities gathered together to talk about the festival of holidays. Everyone had arrived on time but Maheśvara, who, after coming late, then boastfully expanded his body in all directions. Whoever laughed at him, he pulled out their teeth. Then, the deity Brahma said, "I will tell his story." Fearing Brahma was going to tell the story about him when he was a zombie (Skt. vetala, Tib. ro-langs), Maheshvara cut off Brahma's head with his sharp fingernail.

Having remorse for the killing, Maheśvara then assumed the guise of Pashupati (lord of beasts). As Pashupati, he wore bone ornaments and an elephant hide, and in his hands he carried a skull and spear. He wandered all over, dancing crazily in the presence of many people.

Others considered all these activities to be blameworthy. Regarding Maheśvara's behavior, Vishnu said:

He who dwells in a charnel ground,
Living with a host of ghosts,
If one such as this is a deity,
Tell me then, what is a demon?

This verse quoted in the commentary to the *Good Sayings* must also exist in Indian literature. One should find it and read it.

Verse 31.

Sārasa is the name of the king of Asuras. He is also called Hiranyaka, the Golden One. The Golden One practiced [meditatively focusing upon] Maheśvara for many years. After a long time Maheśvara manifested to the Golden One and said, "I shall grant you a boon, What do you want?" The Golden One said, "I wish for the following boon. That I cannot be killed, neither inside nor outside my house, on the earth or in the sky, during day or night, by human or demon, and by weapon or nonweapon." Maheśvara granted the Golden One these demands. Then the Golden One said to his son, "Praise me or kill me! Otherwise, you will die." The son of the Golden One did not know how to praise his father and was pensive. Vishnu, in his ordinary form, approached him and asked, "Why are you so pensive?" The young man told him the story. Viṣṇu replied, "I will teach you how to praise your father." The man was delighted and received the teaching. Viṣṇu said, "Go to your home, make a throne on the doorstep of the house, and place your father on it, saying:

The sage lives in every mountain,
The deity of water lives in every river,
Śiva is found at every village square, and
Viṣṇu pervades everywhere."

The young man did exactly what Viṣṇu said. This verse did not praise the Golden One, it

praised Viṣṇu. Therefore, the Golden One got angry and hitting the doorstep said, “Is Viṣṇu also here?” Then, Lion-Headed Viṣṇu emerged from the crack the Golden One made in the doorstep, lifted up the Golden One, and beheaded him. As an antidote to *neither inside nor outside the house*, he slew him on the doorstep. As an antidote to *neither on the earth nor in sky*, he slew him on his lap. As an antidote to *neither during day nor night*, he slew him at dusk. As an antidote to *neither by human nor demon*, he was slain by a lion-headed man. And, as an antidote to *neither by weapon nor non-weapon*, lion-headed Viṣṇu slew him with his sharp fingernail.

Verse 41.

There was once a pigeon couple who during the summer dried green vegetables. The male pigeon used to go out while the wife stayed inside. When he saw the vegetables disappearing, he accused his wife of eating them in his absence and hit her. She died. Sometime later, as he was drying the vegetables by himself, he found that as they dry they diminish in size. He regretted accusing his innocent wife of theft and hitting and killing her. He spent the remainder of his life in loneliness and grief.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Verse 3.

Even when you have grown very old, you should still accumulate much learning. For the next life, how can giving be as beneficial as learning? In ancient times, there was an old monk. He thought, “I am old, and don’t know much of anything. What was the use of my life? I must study, now!” Thus, he was determined to study, and expended great effort in studying.

The dull-witted king of the country seeing the monk studying hard to gain knowledge, told him, “As a result of the success of your studies, this dried tree will bear fruit.” This statement was discouraging to the monk, but by serving his teacher and tutelary deity, and by making daily effort in his studies, he soon became a learned man. He sent a message to the king to gather fruit from the old dried tree. The king, amazed by the achievement of the old monk, praised and honoured him.

Verse 18.

Ravana is the antagonist of the *Ramayana*, the famous Indian epic, composed by Valmiki, the first Indian Sanskrit poet. Ravana is self-indulgent, always thinking and doing non-virtuous things. He kidnaps Sita, the wife of Prince Rama. Ravana keeps Sita on the isle of Lanka for many years, begging her to marry to him. She strongly refuses, having deep love and devotion for Rama. There are a number of battles between Rama and Ravana, with Ravana eventually being killed by Rama.

When Rama and Sita return to Ayodhya, Sita gives birth to twin boys. Although Rama knows she is morally pure, he has to finally expel his beloved Sita from the royal palace because of rumors about her encounters with Ravana.

Tibetan poets sought to demonstrate their skillfulness by composing poetry based on these episodes. Fifteenth-century poet, Chos dBang Grags pa (1404 – 1469), from Zhang Zhung (Western Tibet), composed the book of poems *Melody of the Gandharva’s Daughter*.

Verse 36.

In ancient Indian wars, elephants were used in battles against the enemy. Indian kings, therefore, kept a division of elephants among the four divisions of the armies. In latter times, foreign invaders, learning that elephants were afraid of fire, carried lighted torches to frighten them. Those campaigns were so successful, that foreign horse-backed invaders defeated the Indians. The kings and their soldiers mistakenly put too much trust in their army of elephants.

Verse 39.

In ancient times, as there were no matches, people used a flint stone to produce fire. Up to the last century, travelers in Tibet and other mountainous countries used to carry a flint to make fire. When the iron of the flint hits against the flint-stone, it produces a spark, which flies onto a cotton-like cloth. The heat from the smouldering cloth is quickly transferred to a dried piece of cattle dung. One gently blows on till the dung ignites, which is used to make the fire that boils water for the travelers' meals.

The moonstone is a precious jewel. If people wish to use a moonstone as a flint, we shouldn't sell it to them, for they will not pay a good price for it.

Verse 70.

In ancient times, in India and Tibet, it is believed, certain people used to practice a ritual to re-animate dead bodies for their own purposes. Sometimes, one of the companions became greedy and would kill their fellow practitioner with the corpse-re-animating ritual.

Corpse-re-animation is pure fiction! When left unexamined, it might just seem real. But after being examined with meditative insight, one will realize that it could never have happened.

Verse 72.

The rat is a friend that one can trust. Knowing that he would be useful to have as a friend, the crow approached him and said, "I would like to be your friend," The rat demurred, saying, "This must be a trick. You really want to eat me!" The crow assured him, "No, I really have faith in you!" Both of them then took an oath to be good friends. These two befriended many other living beings, such as the tortoise, the pigeon, and the deer, and they helped one another, living harmoniously together in the forest.

Verse 89.

Long ago in India, people went to the ocean to find the wish-fulfilling gem (*chintāmaṇi*). They would bring back a few precious stones and place them atop a banner or flag that would be used in prayer to fulfill their wishes. Because of their strong beliefs, they would benefit from these prayers.

There is no limit to people's imagination. Sometimes, however, imagination can give one such comfort that one recovers from illness.

CHAPTER NINE

Verse 20.

The ills of the three lower realms should be prevented before they have developed. Among the six realms of cyclical existence, the upper three are called good destinies and the lower three are called bad destinies. Gods, demigods, and humans are good destinies. Animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings are bad destinies. Those people who help themselves and others are reborn in

good destinies. Those people who harm themselves and others are reborn in bad destinies.

Verse 37.

In ancient India, people believed that snake-bite poisoning could be cured through the recitation of mantras. I have seen some of these mantras translated from the Sanskrit in the Tibetan scriptures. Such Sanskrit mantras used to cure snake bites probably are from ancient Persian sources. Perhaps, in certain places in the world, some people still use mantras such as these to treat snake-bite poisoning (i.e., where modern methods of healing snake bites are not available).

Verse 44.

This undeceiving doctrine of cause and result is the special teaching of the Omniscient One. The people of Āryadeśa (India) believe that virtuous actions result in happiness and non-virtuous actions result in unhappiness. Numerous stories about this can be found in the *Karmaśatakasūtra*, *Damamūkasūtra*, and Vinaya literature, which are themselves collected in the Kanjur, the national treasury of Tibetan Buddhism.

CONCLUSION

Verse 1.

Jīvaka [see chapter five, verse 25] was a physician and contemporary of the Lord Buddha. He was born in Rājagṛha and studied medicine in Takṣaśīla. There are many stories about him in the Vinaya literature. Once he was invited to cure the insomnia of King Caṇḍapadyota of Ujjayinī. He had to use butter to treat the insomnia, even though the king hated butter. Jīvaka mixed butter and medicine in the food that was most appealing in taste to Caṇḍapadyota. After eating the food, Caṇḍapadyota knew that there was butter in it and wanted to punish Jīvaka for feeding it to him. Jīvaka, however, had already run away owing to his fear of Caṇḍapadyota's anger. In the end, after being cured by Jīvaka's treatment, Caṇḍapadyota sent a special precious gift to him in Rājagṛha.

Annotations

CHAPTER ONE

Verse 1.

The highest gods are Indra and Brahmā, etc. The rulers of the Nāgas are Nanda and Upananda. The Vidyādharas [Knowledge Holders] are Jimūta-vāhana, etc. Vyāsa is the composer of the Mahābharata, Vālmiki the composer of the Rām̐yaṅa. Akṣapāda is the founder of the Nyāya system.

Verse 2.

Although the Good Sayings mainly discuss the accomplishment of worldly goals, when one reflects upon them one realizes that they do not contradict [the supramundane nature of] Dharma practice.

Verse 4.

The intelligent one is skillful about what should or should not be done by a person lacking in good qualities. For example, in ancient times in India, there was a monkey who was the king's guard. One night, while the king was sleeping, a thief entered the king's bedroom and saw the king's monkey-guard ready to strike a snake that was resting on the king's body. However, the thief thought, "If this lord of the people dies, it will cause tremendous turmoil for the country. Although, I shall be caught in the act of stealing it does not matter if I am punished. But I must protect the king from being killed or injured." When the thief thwarted the monkey it made a loud noise, which awoke the king. When asked what happened, the thief told the whole story. The king, pleased with the thief's straightforwardness and desire to save his life, gave him a reward.

Verse 5.

The owl is called the ghost bird, as it comes out at night, just like a ghost.

Verse 6.

Wise people can remove evils, but fools cannot. There was, in ancient India, a king who had been looking for an intelligent young man to appoint as minister. He gave a mule to a family to raise. He also arranged to have the mule stolen back by his people. The king then sent a message to the

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Verse 7.

Though people of great wisdom become poor, their understanding waxes strong. Once upon a time in India there was a king who appointed a fisherman as his minister. The fisherman was ungrateful. He had the king assassinated and expelled the two young princes from the country. After pronouncing himself king of the country, he then asked a certain wise man to become his minister. But, the wise man turned down his request, saying, "You are notorious for killing your king! How could I be minister to such an ungrateful person." The king then imprisoned the wise man, and again asked him to become minister. But the wise man adamantly refused to accept the post. Finally, the king told him, "You are learned and wise. It would be a great loss to kill you. Therefore, I shall expel you from this country."

When the wise man went in exile, he spotted the two princes playing among a group of children. He pretended his own lap was a royal lion throne, and he placed the older prince on it and consecrated him as a king. When this young king grew up, he fought against the notorious king, and killed him in revenge for killing his father. The young king gathered his retinue

together—including the wise man as his prime minister—and returned to his country. There, he re-established a set of good laws with which to rule his kingdom.

Verse 13.

Once upon a time, in the city of Ujjayinī, there was a poor man named Cūḍin who lived with his mother. Although he wanted to be a rich man, his goat was his only property. At that time, there was a well known thief living in that city. Cūḍin wanted to fool the thief into giving him some of money. Therefore, Cūḍin pretended to be a rich man and stayed in an expensive hotel. The thief thought that he was a very rich man. That night, the thief made a hole in the wall of the room where Cūḍin was staying and entered the room in order to steal from him. As the thief came through the hole in the wall, Cūḍin was lying awake, waiting to catch him. Cūḍin told the thief “My goat is my only property, You are even trying to steal from a poor man like me! I am going to take you to the king to punish you for stealing!” The thief, who was afraid of being brought before the king, gave Cūḍin many gold coins to dissuade him from turning him in. Cūḍin eagerly accepted the gold coins and agreed not to bring the thief before the king.

Then the Cūḍin prepared to go to another place because he thought that the thief might be planning to steal back his coins. Before departing on his journey Cūḍin covered his coins with leaves and fed them to his goat. On the way, he stayed at a stranger’s house. There, he squeezed his goat, and the goat vomited up the gold coins. The owner of the house saw this and asked what happened. Cūḍin said, “This is a precious wish-fulfilling goat!” The greedy house owner insisted that Cūḍin sell the goat to him. Finally, Cūḍin agreed to sell the goat for a lot of gold coins.

Then, Cūḍin travelled through a thick forest fearing that someone might rob him of all his gold. He encountered a bear who tried to attack him. Cūḍin struggled with all his might and was able to grasp the two ears of the bear, but his coins became scattered all over the place. Because of Cūḍin’s luck, the prince of Mathura suddenly arrived at just that spot for a picnic. He asked Cūḍin , “What are you doing?” Cūḍin replied, “You impeded my practice of meditating upon the deity of wealth in the form of a bear! Don’t you see the rain of gold coins on the ground? Now if you want to practice it you can do it!” The prince, who was greedy, offered Cūḍin his clothes, princely ornaments, and horse. Then, the prince asked Cūḍin to permit him to perform meditation upon the deity of wealth in the form of a bear. Cūḍin handed the bear’s two ears to the prince, whispered some spells in his ears that he should recite, and instructed the prince to hold onto the bear’s ears very tightly until there is a shower of gold coins. Then, Cūḍin gathered all the gold coins from ground, dressed in the princely robes, mounted the horse, and quickly rode away.

Cūḍin rode onward until he arrived at Vārānasī where he met the householder whom he deceitfully sold the goat. The householder took Cūḍin to the King of Varanasi to sue Cūḍin for deceiving him. The king handed Cūḍin over to the householder for punishment. The householder wished to throw Cūḍin into the Ganges River for deceiving him and robbing him of the gold coins. He and his companions stuffed Cūḍin into a box and took it to throw in the river. On the way, they put the box down and asked a cowherd to watch it as they went for a drink of water. Mean-while, the cowherd opened the box and saw Cūḍin. “What are you doing in there?” said the cowherd. “I am a prince who wanted to go to forest to practice meditation, but my people wanted me to remain in my country! If you want to become king, crawl into the box and remain quietly inside until the people place this box on the king’s lion throne. The cowherd was so greedy to become the king that he immediately crawled into the box. When the householder

and his companions came back and lifted up the box up, one of them said, "What happened? It feels lighter than before!" Another said, "It is normal that when people drink water and rest, they feel the load lighter!"

After a few days, Cūḍin dressed in his princely robes, and went to visit the householder. Cūḍin said, "You were very kind to throw me into the Ganges! The Nāgas received me, entertained me, and gave me lots of riches!" Believing him, the greedy householder also wanted to go the Nāga's place. Cūḍin told him "You have to go there the same way that I went!" Cūḍin placed the householder in a box and threw it into the Ganges. Then Cūḍin slandered the Vārānasī King to the Mathura King and he was able to have the Vārānasī King killed as revenge for handing him over to the householder for punishment. In the end, Cūḍin himself became the king of Vārānasī.

Verse 19.

Viṣṇu is also known as Yellow Garbed. Once upon a time, Yellow Garbed fought a longstanding battle with Garuḍa and was defeated. Yellow Garbed, wishing to control Garuḍa, he asked to negotiate with him. Yellow Garbed visited Garuḍa and said, "I am so pleased at how you have defeated others. Please ask for a boon from me." Garuḍa said to Yellow Garbed, "How can such a great one [as I] receive a boon from a lesser one [like you]? You should be receiving the boon [from me!]." Then, Yellow Garbed said to Garuḍa, "In that case, may you become my vehicle!" Ever since then, Garuḍa has been the vehicle of the Yellow-Garbed Viṣṇu.

Verse 20.

Sutasoma was a bodhisattva and Sudāsa was a king, who became a devourer of human flesh as a result of his previous actions (karma). This story appears in Vinaya literature, the Jātaka stories of Ārya Śūrya, the commentary on the *Treasury of Good Sayings* by dMar ston, as well as other literary works in the bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur collections.

Once upon a time, there was a man named Sudāsa who had been eating the flesh of small children for twelve years. Eventually, the people caught him; just as they were about to kill him, he immediately uttered the aspirational prayer, "May I become a powerful monster!" By the power of this prayer, he became a very powerful monster! He invited other monsters to feast upon a meal of five hundred kings. When the monsters had gathered 499 kings, and needed only one more, Sudāsa and his retinue went to catch Sutasoma who was at a picnic. Finally, one monster caught him. Sudāsa saw that king Sutasoma was sad. Sudāsa said to him, "I heard that you are hero, but now I find that you are nervous and sad." Sutasoma said to Sudāsa, "I am not nervous and sad because I have been caught by you, but because I am going to die without fulfilling my promise to give a gift to a mendicant." Sudāsa said to him, "In that case, go home for a week, and, when you return to my home, offer me your body to eat." Sutasoma went to his home and made a good gift to the mendicant. After a week, he went to Sudāsa's home to offer himself to the monster. Sudāsa saw that he was very happy and bright, and became curious. He asked Sutasoma, "Why are you are so cheerful if you are about to die?" Sutasoma told Sudāsa, " I gave a good gift to the mendicant and he was so delighted that he gave me a teaching on life's impermanence. Now you can eat me! Don't delay your feast!" Upon hearing of the teaching of life's impermanence, Sudāsa changed his mind, bowed down to Sutasoma, and listened to his teaching. As a result, his mind became pacified, and in this way, Prince Sutasoma tamed Sudāsa. They met throughout many lifetimes until Prince Sutasoma became

the Buddha and Sudāsa became Aṅgulimāla.

Verse 27.

Verses similar in meaning to this verse are found in the *Pañca Tantra* and the *Prajñādaṇḍa* of Nāgārjuna. In this story, a lion, the king of the beasts, used to kill many beasts every day. One day all the beasts gathered and asked the lion, “You kill many beasts every day, even if one animal is enough for your meal! Would it not be better if one animal from among us came to you each day to offer itself up as your meal?” The lion was agreeable to this proposal.

One day a rabbit on his way to feed the lion saw a deep well. All of a sudden he got an idea how to kill the lion and free all the beasts from becoming his meal. The rabbit showed up at the lion’s den very late, and by the time he arrived the lion was very hungry and angry as well. The lion asked him “Why are you so late?” The rabbit said, “On the way, I was caught by another powerful lion who wanted to eat me! When I told him that I had to go to the great lion king of beasts, he became very angry to learn that there was another lion in this forest. He exclaimed, “I am the king of the beasts. Bring me [the one who claims to be] the king of the beasts in my forest.” Then the rabbit said, “I promised to bring you. Won’t you please come with me?” The rabbit took the lion to the water tank and showed him what was his own reflection in its water. The lion seeing the reflection jumped in, thinking by doing that to kill his adversary. But, he never returned. Thus, the rabbit was successful in his effort.

CHAPTER TWO

Verse 16.

A father once told his son, “You rely upon and associate with bad people. Instead you should rely upon and associate with good people.” The father died. In order to examine his father’s words, the young man came to rely upon a king through working for him and befriended a [greedy] man. One day the king and young man went to hunt tigers in the forest. The king was caught by a tiger and almost killed, but the young man fought off the tiger and killed it. The king was appreciative of that and expressed his gratitude.

The king had a parrot as his play companion. The man stole it and hid it, but he told his friend, “I killed the royal parrot and ate it.” When the king announced he would reward anyone who gave him news about his parrot, the [greedy] man told the king that the parrot was killed by the young man. The king summoned the youth and asked him, “Did you kill my parrot?” The young man said, “Yes, I killed it.” The king told him he would punish him, but the young man reminded him, “You owe me kindness and gratitude for saving your life! I once saved you from being eaten by a tiger!” The king said, “Nonsense! How can I consider a servant’s service to his master as a kindness?”

The man understanding what kind of a person the king was, brought back the royal parrot. He then abandoned the king and the greedy friend that informed on him to obtain the reward.

The young man went to another country. He came to rely upon a king by working for him and married a woman. One day the king and the young man went to a desert for a picnic. There was no water, the king was dying of thirst. The young man went to search for food and brought back three juicy fruits to the king, saving the king’s life. Sometime later, the young man took the prince somewhere and hid him. The young man told his wife, “I killed the prince.” Thereafter, the king announced that he would reward whomever brought him news of his son. The young man’s wife was greedy for the reward and told the king that her husband killed the prince. The king summoned the young man and asked him, “Did you kill my son?” The young man said

“Yes, I did.” The king decreed that the young man be executed. But, the young man challenged the king’s decree by saying, “Just a minute! You owe me kindness for I saved your life in the desert.” The king remembered the young man’s kindness in saving his life. Therefore, the king told the young man, “Of course! Although my son is very precious to me, you saved my life by bringing me three juicy fruits in the desert, Therefore, for the first fruit, I free you from being executed. For the second fruit I will give you my daughter in marriage. And for the third fruit, I shall grant you half of my kingdom.” Then, the young man returned the prince to the king and said, “My lord, how can I accept your gifts? I am merely your servant! I do not need all these rewards.” The king appointed this young man as his minister and the young man served the king honestly for the rest of his life.

Verse 18.

Though a great person may become weak for a short time, don’t worry about that! Prince Puṇyārtha’s story is found in the *Damamūkasūtra* and in the Vinaya in the bKa’ agyur collection. In the story, there are two royal brothers, named Puṇyārtha and Pāpārtha. They both go to the ocean to find a wish-fulfilling jewel. On the way, Prince Pāpārtha pierces Prince Puṇyārtha’s eyes [with a thorn], blinding the prince. Pāpārtha returned home and tells the others that Prince Puṇyārtha died in a shipwreck. Despite being blinded, Prince Puṇyārtha does not lose his determination, and earns his livelihood playing music and singing.

Eventually he returns home together with his wife, asks for his brother Pāpārtha, and forgives him his sin. A more complete version of the story is given in Geshe Wangyal’s *Door of Liberation* (New York: Lotsawa, 1978, pp. 60 – 70, or in the Snow Lion edition, 1995, pp. 65 – 77).

Verse 19.

A long time ago, before there were kings in the world, people became lawless, stealing from one another. Then, a good man arose, protecting people from others’ lawless activities. Because of his honesty and enthusiasm to help people, he was chosen king of the people and became known as Saṃmitīya in Sanskrit and Mang pos bkur ba in Tibetan. You can find this story in the Vinaya literature of Tog bKa’ ‘gur, vol. ga, f. 360b.

CHAPTER THREE

Verse 6.

A fox went to search for food in the countryside. He accidentally fell into a pot containing paint. After struggling to get out, the tips of his hair became dyed the beautiful color of [yellow] sesame flowers. At that time, the animals were looking for a king. When they saw this yellow-colored fox, they agreed to enthrone him as their king. He appointed a lion as his minister and rode on him wherever he traveled. Although the animals served him well, he always became angry with them. He especially caused trouble for the fox clans. When the fox king began suppressing and torturing the animals, they examined him carefully and found him to be nothing but an ordinary fox. Then, the entire animal community ridiculed him. The lion slapped his head and he died instantly.

Verse 14.

Balī was the king of the demigods. At one time, he controlled the whole world and troubled everyone. At that time, Viṣṇu visited him in a guise of a dwarf. Visnu asked Balī for the amount of land that he could cover in one footstep in order to build a hermitage. Balī did not think before he spoke and told him “What is the use of one step? Take three steps instead of one!” Then Viṣṇu transformed himself and assumed a gigantic form. He planted his left foot on the

earth, and, with his first footstep, planted his right foot atop Mount Sumeru! Then he asked Balī “Where shall the next two steps go?” As a consequence, Balī was embarrassed and retreated to the underground. It is a story.

Verse 29.

In ancient times, many rabbits dwelled in a thick forest. A herd of elephants came there on their way to the lake for a drink of water. They crushed the rabbits’ nests. The rabbits held a meeting to decide what to do about this dangerous situation. There was an intelligent rabbit among them that said, “If all of you try to lift me into a tree, I will talk to the elephants.” The herd of rabbits lifted the intelligent rabbit up into a tree, and, when the elephants arrived, the rabbit in a tree said to the elephants, “Listen to me!” The elephants looked up and said, “Who are you and who sent you here?” The rabbit said, “I am the moon’s messenger! The moon says that if you cause the rabbit clan trouble, it will cause hot sand to rain upon you! The moon is speaking through me to you. Don’t harm me!” The elephants consulted with each other and then said to the rabbit, “You are the moon’s messenger! How could we harm you?” Then, the rabbit descended from the tree on an elephant’s head. When he pointed out the shining moon to the elephants, he said, “The moon is pleased with this agreement. Now you can go to your own homes.” From this time onward, the rabbits have lived happily ever after without being harmed by the elephants.

Verse 35.

In this verse the word “bya rog” (crow) appears to be a corruption of the word “bya gag” (goose). The word bya gag is defined as “a kind of water bird whose claws are connected with thin fleshy webs (Tib. skyi mo). They appear in a story about a drying lake where two geese and a tortoise lived. Because the lake was drying up, the two geese wanted to go to another lake. They told the tortoise their plan. The tortoise asked the geese, “Would you please take me along with you?” They responded, “We will fly, but how will you go?” The tortoise answered, “I have a plan, I will clench a stick in my mouth, each of you grab one end of the stick, and we will fly together.” The geese said that it would be possible, but that they did not believe that the tortoise could keep his mouth shut! “The tortoise retorted, “That is not so! I will be quiet.” So they began their journey, with the geese holding the ends of the stick and the tortoise clenching the stick in the middle. A group of children saw this extraordinary event and shouted, “A tortoise is being carried by two geese!” The tortoise could not help but reply, “It is my own plan!” As soon as he spoke, he fell to the earth and was tortured by the children’s play. This story is in the Vinaya literature and is also paraphrased by Akya Yongs ‘dzin in the commentary to the dGe ldan Lega bshad, (*Good Saying of the dGe lugs pa*). f. 7a.

CHAPTER FOUR

Verse 15.

There were once two friends. One sold charcoal while the other sold sandalwood. Every evening, when they got together, they talked about business. The charcoal sold daily, but the sandalwood never sold. The sandalwood seller then thought to himself, “If I were to make this sandalwood look like charcoal, it would sell better.” He then burned up the precious sandalwood to make it look like charcoal, and got nothing for it.

Verse 16.

Wise people have self-reflection, but fools just imitate celebrities. An example of this appears in the following story, which is popular in Buddhist literature: Once upon a time, six rabbits lived

in a forest. A piece of wood fell into a lake, making a huge splash that frightened the six rabbits, and they ran away. A fox saw them running and asked, "What happened?" The rabbits said, "Splashing!" and the fox began to run with them, Soon deer, bears, tigers, and all the beasts were following along.

Finally, a lion seeing them running asked, "What is *splashing*?" But, no one knew what it was! Then, they all went together to see what *splashing* was. On the surface of the lake, they saw, a piece of wood, but nothing else. Thus, the lion freed all the beasts from the fear of *splashing*.

This story is still used in Tibet to help people who are afraid without reason or without knowing the cause of their fear. It is known as "How Splashing Frightened the Rabbits."

Verse 29.

In a remote place there was a rat called Rich Rat. He had a very precious stone. By its mysterious power Rich Rat was able to successfully steal things. One time, however, someone took his precious stone away. As a consequence, Rich Rat lost his ability to steal things. He became depressed and went into exile. As to what then happened to him, we don't exactly know.

CHAPTER FIVE

Verse 1.

The owl is also known as the monster bird as well as the ghost bird (see chapter one, verse 5). Once upon a time the monster bird arrived at the mansion of Indra, king of the gods, and made some sounds. The gods said, "This kind of sound is a bad omen. Kill him!" But the owl said, "I have good news, please wait." The gods replied, "Tell us your good news." He began by saying, "I, along with others, such as 'Friend of Wealth,' 'Great Intellect,' 'Good Throat,' 'Pleasant Voice,' and 'High Throat' are the pleasant voices of the world." Speaking in this way, he tricked them and flew off.

Verse 2.

Wicked people first beguile you with their words, and if you don't watch out, they'll eventually deceive you. There was an old, aging heron who lost his ability to hunt fish. He remained pensively at a bank of a river. A fish asked him, "Why do you look so sad?" The heron replied, "This lake will soon dry up and all of you will also die, Then I will have nothing to eat. Therefore, I worry about all of you! There is a good lake in the distance. If you wish to go to there, I will take all of you to that lake one by one." Every day he took one fish and ate it on a flat stone in the distance. One day the heron was carrying a crab. The crab saw a heap of fish bones and thought, "This heron is deceitful. He killed all the fish that he said he was taking to another lake." So the crab said, "Uncle, where is the lake?" The heron replied, "Little crab, prepare to die, there is no such lake! This is the way that I tricked all the fish and ate them!" The crab bit the heron's neck very hard and killed him. Though the crab was small, his courage and energy saved him and all other fishes in the lake.

Verse 5.

Once upon a time there was a deceitful man who had a donkey. Because the grass was so scarce, he put a leopard skin on the donkey and released it into other's fields. The people shouted, "Leopard in the field!" when they saw a leopard eating grass. However, when they looked more carefully, they found that it was a donkey. Then, the angry people killed it.

Verse 6.

Once upon a time in India, a young brahman priest was carrying a goat to a certain place in order to worship a god. A gang of five thieves saw his goat and wanted to steal it. So they divided themselves up and went to five different places. Each time the brahman encountered one of the thieves unknowingly, he heard them say, "A brahman is carrying a dog. To think, such an occasion exists in the world!" After hearing this same speech a couple of times, the brahman boy thinking that it must be a dog after all and not a goat gave up the goat the next time he encountered one of the thieves and went away. The thieves, succeeding in their conspiracy, went home with the goat.

Verse 7.

In ancient times in India, there was a rich family without a child. The family prayed to their deity for a child. Soon, they begot a child and named him Mahadeva. In order to hold a big feast in honor of the child's birth, the father went to ocean to find gold, etc. However, it took him twelve years to return! Waiting for the father to return, the child grew up and fell in love with his mother due to the result of karma. When the time came for the father to arrive, the boy's mother badly advised him to assassinate his father. The boy foolishly killed his father.

Sometime thereafter, the mother had a sexual relationship with another man. When Mahadeva found out he got very angry and confused, and killed his mother too. A saint who had been Mahadeva's teacher used to come to his home. Mahadeva thought, "This man will tell others that I killed my parents." And so he murdered this saint, as well.

Owing to his evil actions, Mahadeva grew depressed and did not feel comfortable living in his home, So he went to Magadha. At that time, there was a famine. By living as a lay person, it was difficult to procure enough food. However, Mahadeva observed that it was easier to acquire food living in the guise of a monk. So, he gathered saffron-coloured clothes in charnel ground and put them on. Without joining the abbot or the other monks, he begged for alms in the cities and villages. Because of his evil actions, he always looked down. When he gave a religious teaching to cowherds and others, everyone thought he was a true practitioner.

One night, remembering all his evil actions [his sexual relationship with his mother, committing patricide and matricide, killing the saint, dressing as a monk without ordination, and pretending to be a saint], he cried out and lamented. His disciples asked him, "Why did you cry out so loudly last night? He said again, "Alas, there is suffering, the causes of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering." In that way, he deceived his disciples. Eventually when he died, he accepted that he would be reborn in hell for all of his evil actions.

Verse 9.

A deceitful man was selling meat. He showed others a deer's tail. When people saw this, they believed that he was selling deer meat and asked for some. However, he sold them donkey meat. This verse shows us that there are many types of people. Beware of these kind of people.

Verse 11.

In ancient times, there was a country named Kanchi. Traditionally, when the king died, his eldest son succeeded. However, any of the princes able to assassinate the king could beat the victory drum and become king.

Verse 15.

A man had a peacock that could dance. Over time, his peacock lost its feathers. So, the man cut the peacock's crest of feathers and placed them on the spot where the peacock formerly had its tail feathers. It didn't work and people called him "crazy."

Verse 17.

The wicked cause mischief especially for the virtuous, peaceful person. Once there was a good buffalo and a bad monkey in a forest. The nasty monkey used to climb on the buffalo's back and do mischievous things. Since the buffalo was gentle and peaceful, he did not respond to the monkey's mischievousness. But the deities of the forest seeing the monkey's bad behaviour, took him off the buffalo's back, and made him promise not to harm the peaceful animal.

Verse 25.

When the Lord Buddha was alive, the great physician Kumara Jivaka told venerable Ananda, "Lord Buddha had a body strong as a diamond; therefore, offer twelve pounds of medicine to the Lord. Except for the Lord Buddha, don't give that much to anyone else."

When Ananda offered that amount of medicine to the Lord, Devadatta said, "I also need twelve pounds of medicine. There's no difference between me and Gautama, the mendicant." So, he took twelve pounds of medicine, but he could not digest the medicine, became ill, and almost died. He told a physician about his illness. The physician said, "There is no way to cure an illness caused by not being able to digest medicine."

Then, Lord Buddha placed his hand on the Devadatta's head and blessed him. After that, Devadatta was cured of his illness. He said, "Gautama the mendicant also has a good understanding of medicine. He won't have to die of hunger when he reaches old age." Devadatta was not grateful for the Buddha's healing true words.

Verse 26.

In ancient times, a lion and a fox lived together in the forest. The fox ate much of the flesh from animals that the lion killed. One time, the body of an elephant killed by the lion was lying on the ground. The lion told the fox, "Carry the flesh of this elephant." The fox seeking to trick the lion said, "I cannot do both jobs at once, O Lord. Would you do one?" The lion responded, "What two jobs?" The fox replied, "One is carrying flesh in the lead position, while the other is walking behind making cooing sounds." The lion thought, "To stay behind cooing after a fox is not a job worthy of me." Therefore, he decided to carry the elephant's flesh at the front of the line. The fox followed behind him cooing, and thought, "This is the sound of pure enjoyment."

Verse 28.

Place confidence in no one without careful reflection, and give advice to no one. A long time ago in India, a man went to search for his lost cow. Not having anything to eat or drink for several days, he became exhausted and almost died. Because he was so hungry and weak, when he went to pick some fruit from a tree at the edge of precipice, because the fruit was so heavy, he fell into a deep abyss, along with a few of the tree's branches. A kind monkey heard a [human] voice rising up out of the deep abyss and looking down, saw the man almost dead down there. The monkey, jumping into the abyss, carried the man out. The trustworthy monkey told the man, "I am tired and need to rest. Meanwhile, would you protect us both from other predatory beasts?" Then, the monkey fell asleep. The ungrateful man thought, "I am so weak! I will kill this monkey and eat its meat to nourish me." So he threw a big stone on the monkey. Yet somehow, the monkey was miraculously prevented from injury. The monkey awoke and said to

the man, "What happened?" The man was so embarrassed that he looked down. No one else was there besides the two of them and the monkey understood the man's intention. Filled with even more compassion for the man, the monkey took the man to the edge of the forest and said to him, "Don't waste your precious leisure and opportunity, but instead practice goodness." Then the monkey returned to his forest.

According to dMarston, this story also applies for verse 38.

Verse 38.

Even when they are close friends, do not place trust in bad-natured people who prize wealth. Long ago, there was a golden-coloured deer who was a bodhi-sattva. He saw a hunter being carried away by the strong current of river. Feeling compassion for the hunter, the deer rescued the hunter from the river. The hunter said, "Thank you for being so very kind to me! Would you please come to my home?" The deer replied, "You are a human being, and I am a deer. We have different life styles, If you really want to return my kindness, please don't tell anyone where I live." Upon returning to his village, the hunter heard that the king had just made the following request: "I will reward anyone who can tell me where in the forest lives the golden-coloured deer that I saw in a dream." The hunter, desiring the king's reward, immediately forgot the deer's kindness and his request not to reveal his whereabouts. He took the king to the spot where he was rescued by the golden-coloured deer. Just as the king was about to shoot, the deer cried out in human language, "Wait! Who told you where I live?" The king pointed to the man who was rescued by the deer. The deer saw the man looking down, embarrassed. The king asked "What happened?" When the king heard how the deer rescued the hunter, he wanted to punish the hunter. The deer, who felt even more compassion for the hunter, asked the king not to punish him, and said "This happened to me because of my own karmic actions."

It seems dMarston took this story from the *Jātakamālā*, ch. 26.

Verse 40.

When all the birds assembled looking for a king, some looked at the owl and said, "This one is very bright, has good night vision and horns on his head. Therefore, he would be a worthy candidate as our king." Then, the crow said, "What did you say? The owl's feet are full of cracks, his eyes are greasy, his voice is unpleasant, and the horns on his head are a bad omen! I do not understand why you wish to elect the owl as our king." Saying this, the crow went away. All the birds accepted the crow's reasons for not choosing the owl as their king. Turning away from the owl, the birds dispersed. Since that time, [for over an aeon], the crow and the owl have been enemies.

CHAPTER SIX

Verse 25.

Long ago, the birds were looking for a king. They decided that the one who saw the sun rise first would become king of the birds. The bat and pigeon were able to see the sun rising first. The bat had the pigeon cram flour into his mouth, making him unable to speak. When the birds saw how the bat deceived the pigeon, they did not appoint the bat as their king. So they decided that whoever reached the highest point in sky would become their king. When the bat heard this, he hid among the feathers of the vulture. When the vulture claimed, "I reached the highest of point in the sky!" the bat replied, "I reached a higher point in the sky than you, (for I was hidden in your feathers)!" Hearing the bat, all the birds told him, "You don't have feathers, but horns and

an ugly complexion! Therefore, you cannot even be considered a bird! Needless to say, you cannot become the king of the birds.”

Verse 54.

The Kaurava Princes and the Pandava brothers are the protagonists of the *Mahābhārata*, which was composed by the sage Vyāsa. These stories from the *Mahābhārata* are of great interest to many Tibetan poets. In his commentary to the *Treasury of Good Sayings*, dMar ston wrote a small folio, 66b to 77a, summarizing this particular story as follows:

The sage Vyāsa [according to dMar ston but actually Vichitravirya] had two wives. With his wife from the warrior caste he had a son named Paṇḍu and with his wife from the brahmin caste he had a son named Dhṛtarāṣṭra. At this time Paṇḍu was ruling the kingdom. Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not have any sons. His father, Vyāsa [sic], wanting him to have sons prayed, “May you have one hundred sons.” Instead Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s wife gave birth to a lump of meat. Dhṛtarāṣṭra visited his father and told him, “Instead of one hundred sons, my wife gave a birth to a lump of meat.” Vyāsa [sic] replied, “It will turn into one hundred sons.” By cutting the lump of meat into one hundred pieces, one hundred sons were born. Then a soothsayer told Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his wife, “These one hundred sons have ominous signs. If you don’t kill them quickly, they will be very harmful to your clan, and your family lineage will be cut off.” Their mother said, “Although they have ominous signs, they are my sons and I would not dare kill them.”

Prince Paṇḍu also did not have any sons. With his two wives, Madri and Kunti, he went to a forest. While in the forest he mistakenly shot a deer that was actually a sage in disguise. The dying sage cursed him, “May you die when you have sexual relations with your wife. This is your punishment as a result of shooting me while I was having sexual relations with my wife.” Because of this curse, Pandu refrained from having sex with any of his wives for many years. In order not to cut off the lineage, the two wives gave birth to five sons that were conceived with five different divine persons. Arjuna was one of these sons, who were called the Paṇḍavas. Eventually, when Paṇḍu was having sex with Madri, lightning struck him as a result of the sage’s curse and he immediately died. Madri told Kunti, “My three sons and your two sons should be raised together,” and then Madri jumped into Paṇḍu’s funeral pyre.

Thus Kuntī and the Paṇḍavas went to their royal palace and lived there receiving the respect of the people. The Kauravas then thought, “These Paṇḍavas will take our possessions and properties, so we should destroy them right now with a trick.” They made a small house of shellac for the Paṇḍavas and told them they and their mother should live there. When the Paṇḍavas and their mother were inside the house, the Kauravas set the house on fire.

The Paṇḍavas and their mother fortunately escaped from the burning house unharmed, and went to live in exile. The sons married a woman, with whom they alternatively slept with. When their wife had a son with Bhīmasena, he became the nephew of the other four Paṇḍavas.

Now, in their family there were eight members. They were enjoying their lives, but the Kauravas challenged them to fight. With the help of Kṛṣṇa, the Paṇḍavas fought against the Kauravas and were able to conquer the Kauravas’s twelve armies. After defeating them, the Paṇḍavas, primarily Yudhiṣṭhir, ruled over the land of Kuru.

Verse 57.

There was a country called Gauḍa in eastern India, and in that kingdom there was a king named Ramapala. One time he called all his subjects together and said, “Surround the ocean and make a war in order to subjugate the island dwellers.” His decree caused the ocean to be bound. After

a while, a lady possessing beautiful ornaments said to the King of Gauḍa, “My Lord, you bound the ocean. Please release it.” The Gauḍa King said, “I did not bind it! When did I bind it?” The lady replied, “The time when you said, ‘Bind the ocean and make a war,’ you bound the ocean.” The king responded, “Then release the ocean.” After saying that, the ocean was released. This is a well-known story.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Verse 21.

Once upon a time, a fox was roaming the countryside looking for food, when he saw two tough sheep fighting each other whose heads were bleeding. When the fox went to lick some of the blood from their wounds, he unfortunately was trapped between them and his head was smashed into a hundred pieces. So it has been told.

Verse 23.

Once upon a time Good Wing, king of the owls, and Country Protector, king of the crows, were enemies. The owl army and the crow army had fought for a long time and their battles were never-ending.

The owls had a minister named Golden Eye and the crows had a minister named Possessing the Power of Clouds. The minister to the crow king thought of a plan. “It is difficult for us to conquer the owl army. We tried to negotiate with them, but they were not agreeable. Now we’ll have to trick them. All of you should notch my feathers, cut my limbs, and then leave me behind and go away.” His friends did as he said. When the owls came and saw the crow minister in bad shape, they asked him what happened. The crow minister told them, “Although, I wanted to negotiate with you, my own crows would not cooperate. They tortured me, cut up my limbs, and notched my feathers.” The owl king believed the crow minister when he spoke that way.

The king of owls had the crow minister brought to his palace. The owl minister asked the king not to bring the crow minister to the palace, but the king did not listen. Since the owl minister could not agree with his king, he went away.

The king asked the crow’s minister to help him. He said, “You are intelligent. You can help me make this palace more comfortable.” The crow’s minister rebuilt the palace with wood, plaster, and smooth cow dung. The owl palace looked beautiful. When the crow minister had become trusted by the owl king and his retinue, he sent a message to his species, “Everyone of you should bring a burning torch.” Then the crows brought torches and burned up all the owls’ nests, and the owls all perished in the blaze. It is said that nowadays all owls are descendants of the owl’s minister, Golden Eye.

Verse 26.

Taḍibha was a small bird whose nest lay close to the seashore. One time, the ocean waves came crashing down upon the shoreline and destroyed the nest with its little eggs in it. The small bird told the other birds what happened. They said, “How can we protect ourselves from the sea? We cannot do anything!” All the birds then cried out noisily to Garuḍa, king of birds, “Don’t you see how the great ocean does so much damage to the bird clan?” Hearing this tumultuous noise, Garuḍa got very angry and, in revenge, began destroying all Nāgas who inhabit the sea. Then Garuda, the ocean, and the birds negotiated an agreement to allow birds to build their nests where the waves of the sea would not reach.

Verse 30.

All the Indian deities gathered together to talk about the festival of holidays. Everyone had arrived on time but Maheśvara, who, after coming late, then boastfully expanded his body in all directions. Whoever laughed at him, he pulled out their teeth. Then, the deity Brahma said, "I will tell his story." Fearing Brahma was going to tell the story about him when he was a zombie (Skt. *vetala*, Tib. *ro-langs*), Maheshvara cut off Brahma's head with his sharp fingernail.

Having remorse for the killing, Maheśvara then assumed the guise of Pashupati (lord of beasts). As Pashupati, he wore bone ornaments and an elephant hide, and in his hands he carried a skull and spear. He wandered all over, dancing crazily in the presence of many people.

Others considered all these activities to be blameworthy. Regarding Maheśvara's behavior, Vishnu said:

He who dwells in a charnel ground,
Living with a host of ghosts,
If one such as this is a deity,
Tell me then, what is a demon?

This verse quoted in the commentary to the *Good Sayings* must also exist in Indian literature. One should find it and read it.

Verse 31.

Sārasa is the name of the king of Asuras. He is also called Hiranyaka, the Golden One. The Golden One practiced [meditatively focusing upon] Maheśvara for many years. After a long time Maheśvara manifested to the Golden One and said, "I shall grant you a boon, What do you want?" The Golden One said, "I wish for the following boon. That I cannot be killed, neither inside nor outside my house, on the earth or in the sky, during day or night, by human or demon, and by weapon or nonweapon." Maheśvara granted the Golden One these demands. Then the Golden One said to his son, "Praise me or kill me! Otherwise, you will die." The son of the Golden One did not know how to praise his father and was pensive. Vishnu, in his ordinary form, approached him and asked, "Why are you so pensive?" The young man told him the story. Viṣṇu replied, "I will teach you how to praise your father." The man was delighted and received the teaching. Viṣṇu said, "Go to your home, make a throne on the doorstep of the house, and place your father on it, saying:

The sage lives in every mountain,
The deity of water lives in every river,
Śiva is found at every village square, and
Viṣṇu pervades everywhere."

The young man did exactly what Viṣṇu said. This verse did not praise the Golden One, it praised Viṣṇu. Therefore, the Golden One got angry and hitting the doorstep said, "Is Viṣṇu also here?" Then, Lion-Headed Viṣṇu emerged from the crack the Golden One made in the doorstep, lifted up the Golden One, and beheaded him. As an antidote to *neither inside nor outside the house*, he slew him on the doorstep. As an antidote to *neither on the earth nor in sky*, he slew him on his lap. As an antidote to *neither during day nor night*, he slew him at dusk. As an antidote to *neither by human nor demon*, he was slain by a lion-headed man. And, as an antidote to *neither by weapon nor non-weapon*, lion-headed Viṣṇu slew him with his sharp fingernail.

Verse 41.

There was once a pigeon couple who during the summer dried green vegetables. The male pigeon used to go out while the wife stayed inside. When he saw the vegetables disappearing, he accused his wife of eating them in his absence and hit her. She died. Sometime later, as he was drying the vegetables by himself, he found that as they dry they diminish in size. He regretted accusing his innocent wife of theft and hitting and killing her. He spent the remainder of his life in loneliness and grief.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Verse 3.

Even when you have grown very old, you should still accumulate much learning. For the next life, how can giving be as beneficial as learning? In ancient times, there was an old monk. He thought, "I am old, and don't know much of anything. What was the use of my life? I must study, now!" Thus, he was determined to study, and expended great effort in studying.

The dull-witted king of the country seeing the monk studying hard to gain knowledge, told him, "As a result of the success of your studies, this dried tree will bear fruit." This statement was discouraging to the monk, but by serving his teacher and tutelary deity, and by making daily effort in his studies, he soon became a learned man. He sent a message to the king to gather fruit from the old dried tree. The king, amazed by the achievement of the old monk, praised and honoured him.

Verse 18.

Ravana is the antagonist of the *Ramayana*, the famous Indian epic, composed by Valmiki, the first Indian Sanskrit poet. Ravana is self-indulgent, always thinking and doing non-virtuous things. He kidnaps Sita, the wife of Prince Rama. Ravana keeps Sita on the isle of Lanka for many years, begging her to marry to him. She strongly refuses, having deep love and devotion for Rama. There are a number of battles between Rama and Ravana, with Ravana eventually being killed by Rama.

When Rama and Sita return to Ayodhya, Sita gives birth to twin boys. Although Rama knows she is morally pure, he has to finally expel his beloved Sita from the royal palace because of rumors about her encounters with Ravana.

Tibetan poets sought to demonstrate their skillfulness by composing poetry based on these episodes. Fifteenth-century poet, Chos dBang Grags pa (1404 – 1469), from Zhang Zhung (Western Tibet), composed the book of poems *Melody of the Gandharva's Daughter*.

Verse 36.

In ancient Indian wars, elephants were used in battles against the enemy. Indian kings, therefore, kept a division of elephants among the four divisions of the armies. In latter times, foreign invaders, learning that elephants were afraid of fire, carried lighted torches to frighten them. Those campaigns were so successful, that foreign horse-backed invaders defeated the Indians. The kings and their soldiers mistakenly put too much trust in their army of elephants.

Verse 39.

In ancient times, as there were no matches, people used a flint stone to produce fire. Up to the last century, travelers in Tibet and other mountainous countries used to carry a flint to make fire.

When the iron of the flint hits against the flint-stone, it produces a spark, which flies onto a cotton-like cloth. The heat from the smouldering cloth is quickly transferred to a dried piece of cattle dung. One gently blows on till the dung ignites, which is used to make the fire that boils water for the travelers' meals.

The moonstone is a precious jewel. If people wish to use a moonstone as a flint, we shouldn't sell it to them, for they will not pay a good price for it.

Verse 70.

In ancient times, in India and Tibet, it is believed, certain people used to practice a ritual to re-animate dead bodies for their own purposes. Sometimes, one of the companions became greedy and would kill their fellow practitioner with the corpse-re-animating ritual.

Corpse-re-animation is pure fiction! When left unexamined, it might just seem real. But after being examined with meditative insight, one will realize that it could never have happened.

Verse 72.

The rat is a friend that one can trust. Knowing that he would be useful to have as a friend, the crow approached him and said, "I would like to be your friend," The rat demurred, saying, "This must be a trick. You really want to eat me!" The crow assured him, "No, I really have faith in you!" Both of them then took an oath to be good friends. These two befriended many other living beings, such as the tortoise, the pigeon, and the deer, and they helped one another, living harmoniously together in the forest.

Verse 89.

Long ago in India, people went to the ocean to find the wish-fulfilling gem (*chintāmaṇi*). They would bring back a few precious stones and place them atop a banner or flag that would be used in prayer to fulfill their wishes. Because of their strong beliefs, they would benefit from these prayers.

There is no limit to people's imagination. Sometimes, however, imagination can give one such comfort that one recovers from illness.

CHAPTER NINE

Verse 20.

The ills of the three lower realms should be prevented before they have developed. Among the six realms of cyclical existence, the upper three are called good destinies and the lower three are called bad destinies. Gods, demigods, and humans are good destinies. Animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings are bad destinies. Those people who help themselves and others are reborn in good destinies. Those people who harm themselves and others are reborn in bad destinies.

Verse 37.

In ancient India, people believed that snake-bite poisoning could be cured through the recitation of mantras. I have seen some of these mantras translated from the Sanskrit in the Tibetan scriptures. Such Sanskrit mantras used to cure snake bites probably are from ancient Persian sources. Perhaps, in certain places in the world, some people still use mantras such as these to treat snake-bite poisoning (i.e., where modern methods of healing snake bites are not available).

Verse 44.

This undecieving doctrine of cause and result is the special teaching of the Omniscient One. The people of Āryadeśa (India) believe that virtuous actions result in happiness and non-virtuous actions result in unhappiness. Numerous stories about this can be found in the Karmaśatakasūtra, Damamūkasūtra, and Vinaya literature, which are themselves collected in the Kanjur, the national treasury of Tibetan Buddhism.

CONCLUSION

Verse 1.

Jīvaka [see chapter five, verse 25] was a physician and contemporary of the Lord Buddha. He was born in Rājagṛha and studied medicine in Takṣaśīla. There are many stories about him in the Vinaya literature. Once he was invited to cure the insomnia of King Caṇḍapadyota of Ujjayinī. He had to use butter to treat the insomnia, even though the king hated butter. Jīvaka mixed butter and medicine in the food that was most appealing in taste to Caṇḍapadyota. After eating the food, Caṇḍapadyota knew that there was butter in it and wanted to punish Jīvaka for feeding it to him. Jīvaka, however, had already run away owing to his fear of Caṇḍapadyota's anger. In the end, after being cured by Jīvaka's treatment, Caṇḍapadyota sent a special precious gift to him in Rājagṛha.

Annotations

CHAPTER ONE

Verse 1.

The highest gods are Indra and Brahmā, etc. The rulers of the Nāgas are Nanda and Upananda. The Vidyādharas [Knowledge Holders] are Jimūta-vāhana, etc. Vyāsa is the composer of the Mahābharata, Vālmiki the composer of the Rāmāyaṇa. Akṣapāda is the founder of the Nyāya system.

Verse 2.

Although the Good Sayings mainly discuss the accomplishment of worldly goals, when one reflects upon them one realizes that they do not contradict [the supramundane nature of] Dharma practice.

Verse 4.

The intelligent one is skillful about what should or should not be done by a person lacking in good qualities. For example, in ancient times in India, there was a monkey who was the king's guard. One night, while the king was sleeping, a thief entered the king's bedroom and saw the king's monkey-guard ready to strike a snake that was resting on the king's body. However, the thief thought, "If this lord of the people dies, it will cause tremendous turmoil for the country. Although, I shall be caught in the act of stealing it does not matter if I am punished. But I must protect the king from being killed or injured." When the thief thwarted the monkey it made a loud noise, which awoke the king. When asked what happened, the thief told the whole story. The king, pleased with the thief's straightforwardness and desire to save his life, gave him a reward.

Verse 5.

The owl is called the ghost bird, as it comes out at night, just like a ghost.

Verse 6.

Wise people can remove evils, but fools cannot. There was, in ancient India, a king who had been looking for an intelligent young man to appoint as minister. He gave a mule to a family to raise. He also arranged to have the mule stolen back by his people. The king then sent a message to the

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