



The Buddha's Path of Virtue: A Translation of the Dhammapada

F. L. Woodward M.A.

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The Dhammapada, of which a metrical translation by Mr. Woodward is here presented, is a precious Buddhist Scripture which deserves to be widely known. The Theosophical Society is to be congratulated on securing so competent and sympathetic a translator and on publishing it in a popular form. The Dhammapada is a part of the Khuddaka Nikaya of the Buddhistic Canon and consists of about 420 stanzas in the sloka metre. Every fully ordained bhikkhu is expected to know the book by heart, and its verses are often on the lips of pious laymen. The beginner of Buddhist studies can have no better introduction to Buddhism and must go back to it again and again to enter into the spirit of Buddha and his apostles. The Scriptures of the Buddhist Canon are known collectively as the Tri-piaka (Sansk. Tri-piaka), "the Three Baskets or Treasuries". These divisions correspond to the two Testaments of the Christian Bible and contain (excluding repetitions) more than twice as much matter. They are known separately as the Vinaya piaka, Sutta piaka and Abhidhamma piaka, the Basket of Discipline, the Basket of Discourses and the Basket of Metaphysics. These scriptures are regarded with the utmost veneration by Buddhists as containing the word of Buddha (Buddha-vacanam), and are reputed to have been recited at the first Council held, according to tradition, at Rajagaha immediately after Buddha's death circa 540 B.C.

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