# Towards e Better VNorld 



## Towards

A

## Better World

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' Lo-wáda Sangarāva'

A Sinhalese poem of
the 15th century
by
Venerable Vīdāgama Maitreya Mahāthera

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Dedicated with gratitude
to the Venerable Great Poet of
Vīdāgama
and
to my departed parents
for the influence of this poem
on the formative years of my life

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## INTRODUCTION

"Towards a Better World' is a translation of the famous Sinhala didactic poem "Lo-wa̋da Sangarāva" composed by the Venerable Vīdāgama Maitreya Mahāthera (15 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ C.A.D). This venerable poet flourished during the Kotte period of Sri Lankan history, which saw a revival of Sinhala literature. As the head of the Vīdāgama Sri Ghanānanda monastery, a leading educational centre of the Kotte Era, the Venerable Mahāthera made a notable contribution to Sinhala literature and Buddhist culture with his rare poetic talent and eloquence in preaching. "Lo-wäda Sangarāva" is the best known among his literary works, both for its remarkable poetic excellence and the vast impact it has made on the lives of the Buddhists ever since it was composed.

Drawing his inspiration from the Canonical discourses which emphasized the value of birth as a human being in an extremely rare Buddha-age with its prospect of an exit from the samsaric cycle of births and deaths, the venerable poet sounds a clarion call to arouse a sense of urgency in making the best use of that rare opportunity. He makes no pretence in addressing the poem directly to the reader himself, awakening him gradually from common-sense to a deeper sense of values. The purpose of the poem is to instil and inspire, aiming at an inner transformation in the reader and the listener. The language and the idiom used are geared to the benevolent purpose of character-moulding.

Couched in the classical Sinhala metre abounding in alliteration, the poem is a perfect blend of sound and sense. Its powerful diction is marked by an effective employment of stirring metaphors and similes both Canonical and original. The imagery is often so picturesque that most of the verses could well be depicted pictorially. We have resisted the temptation to render the poem into English verse, in order to be more faithful to its contents. Any traces of poetic diction, however, that may have crept into the present translation, are probably due to the very inspiration coming from the original itself.

Lowa̋da Sangarāva has had an immense appeal to several generations of Buddhists over the past few centuries, mainly because of its lucid presentation of the salient teachings of the Buddha. Within the space of four lines full of rhyme - and - reason the poet would often drive - home a deep truth of Dhamma through homely similes and metaphors. In just four lines he could make one vividly aware of the ironies of one's present life situation so as to bring about a transformation in one's total outlook on life. In this respect the poem has the
flavour of the 'come-and-see' quality of the Dhamma (ehipassiko) as well as the quality of 'leading-one-onwards' (opanayiko)

The poem vibrates through and through with a note of compassion for the morally degraded, lifting them up to an awareness of their potential for higher things. The hortative tone of the poem comes-it seems-not from an 'ivory' - tower but from a heart that almost bleeds for those who have gone astray due to ignorance or 'non-knowledge'. Clarification has to precede purification, at least initially. So the poet has modestly chosen the common medium of the natives, making a case for its effectiveness rather apologetically in preference to the more fashionable Pali of the elite. True to his promise, the poet has succeeded in portraying vividly the manifold dangers in samsāra (the cycle of recurrent births and deaths) with its relentless law of karma (the moral law of cause and effect), and in highlighting the ideal of the sublime peace of Nibbana as the ultimate goal in life.

At a juncture in which the West is looking up to the wisdom of the East to make its own concept of the millenium a reality, this time-honoured didactic poem of the Venerable Vīdāgama Maitreya Mahāthera is presented here in translation in the hope that it will contribute towards a better world. The a-moral and the immoral trends in moden society, wedded as it is to material progress as the hand-maid of prosperity, are leading towards moral anarchy with disastrous consequences. May this translation - 'Towards a Better World' - help bring about an inner transformation by an awakening to the true values of life !

Bhikku K. Nāṇananda

Pothgulgala Āranya<br>"Pahan Kanuwa"<br>Kandegedara<br>Devalegama<br>Sri Lanka<br>June 2000 (B. E. 2544)

(Note: As the poem has come down with many variant readings, several editions had to be collated for the present text and translation).

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Glad at heart，I pay homage to the supreme sage－the giver of Blissful Peace，the Great Ocean of virtue，the physician for the samsāric ills of beings，the sun that dispels the pitchy darkness of false views．
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โీవి
Pleased in mind，I pay homage to the true Dhamma proclaimed by the Buddha with discerning wisdom to suit the levels of understanding of all beings－the Dhamma which invites one to come－and－see and which is comprehensible by each according to his degree of intelligence．

ชณ์วง



๔นิงล๖ง

ఠชతฺฺை
With clasped hands on my forehead I bow down to the Great Sangha－the worthy order rich in virtue，coming down from the lineage of the venerables Sāriputta and Moggallāna for whom the heads of illustrious Brahmas served as a door－mat for rubbing their feet on．


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๔ฉ๑อ
Having thus expressed my adoration with fervent devotion to the Incomparble Tamer of the tameable，to the Dhamma and to the Sangha I shall now go on to relate the results of Kamma in Sinhala，particularly for the benefit of those who do not know the teachings in the Pali Canon．




On listening with rapt attention to a recitation of some Sinhala－ verses composed in tune with the Dhamma，sixty monks attained Nibbāna in the past by reflecting on the manifold perils in the process of the（Five）Aggregates ${ }^{1}$





Therefore，without showing any disrespect simply because it is worded in Sinhala，if you listen to this marvellous Dhamma with worshipful devotion and gladness，you will surely gain heavenly bliss and the bliss of emancipation．





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Do not listen to a sermon seated on the floor while the preacher is standing．Do not listen to it with a confused mind seated on a higher seat than the preacher．When someone is preaching， listen attentively with interest．It is such hearing of the Dhamma that holds the prospect of heavenly bliss and the bliss of emancipation．

ఠฺง๔นโค

วินีะโ็


Let all beings do meritorious deeds which difinitely lead them towards the bliss of emancipation freeing them from the mani－ fold ills of samsāra．This is the advice of the Buddha．There are however，eight inopportune circumstances which make it impos－ sible for one to do merits．

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If one falls into one of the 136 hells which are frightful even to think of，one will have to undergo immense suffering and hardship．Then there will not be the slightest opportunity for doing merits．


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If one is reborn in the animal realm as a result of doing evil deeds，one will be endlessly gripped by constant fear．There will not be the slightest peace of mind at any time．How then can one direct one＇s attention to merit ？






When one is reborn as a peta（a ghostly being）having done evil deeds which violate moral laws，one will never get at least phlegm and snot（as drink）One＇s throat will remain parched even if one falls into the heavenly river．It is imposible then to do any merit， even if one wishes to．





When one is born in outer regions where the Buddha＇s teachings are unknown，and where people are always doing evil deeds with no idea of merits，one can never do any worth while skilful deed even if one is born in to wealthy circumstances．

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If one has got this body in a blind，dumb and deaf form，having committed grave unskilful deeds and neglected the skilful，owing to one＇s faith in the words of foolish people at some time or other，one cannot gather even a little merit．Have no doubt about it．

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There are four Brahma worlds where only the mind exists but not the body．There is also a Brahma realm where the body exists without the mind．These too are realms where beings are born due to merits done．But once born there，they are unable to do any skilful deeds．


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Merits do not accrue also to those who adhere to wrong views， which are comparable to a citadel within the city of samsāra，or to a parasitic root which throws out a flush of sprouts in the bush of evil deeds，or to poisonous thorns on the pathway to heaven and Nibbana．


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In an age in which no Buddha is born in this world，this samsāra is in utter gloom as it is deprived of the Good Dhamma．There is no clear－cut distinction then between demerit and merit and there－ fore it is not possible to attain either heavenly or Nibbanic bliss．


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Though it is a fact that you have heard the Dhamma preached by the Buddha，you are now neglecting skilful deeds only be－ cause you do not pay heed to it like the dumb and the deaf． There are only those aforesaid eight occasions which truly make it impossible to perform merit．





Even if a turtle ${ }^{2}$ ，rising up to the surface of the ocean which is as long and as wide as the world－system itself－once in every hun－ dred years－would succeed in inserting its head into the hole in a yoke by chance，it is far more difficult for one who has gone down into a bad bourn，to get the chance of being reborn again into the human world．

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Rare indeed is the birth of a Buddha．Hard it is to get human birth．It is with the help of these two that one makes an end of this samsāric suffering．Good men！Why don＇t you put forth your best efforts？

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Committing the five evil deeds and being remorseful here itself， they go down into hell to undergo manifold sufferings there．So， do your best to accumulate merit now that you are still in this human world．See to it that you do not throw away this rare chance of a human birth．


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What is the use in gloating over the pleasures of sense like those who go on eating with relish poisoned mangoes？Close on your heels comes Death－even now．So it is merit that you should do， if you are clever enough．


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There is no other special advice to be given for abandoning this mass of suffering which does not leave this samsaric existence， than to be as heedful in doing skilful deeds as one whose head is on fire，is in trying to put out that fire ${ }^{3}$ ．


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Just as a pebble even though thrown up skywards with effort， rests nowhere in between but falls back to the ground，even so，if you do not do merit in the proper way with a joyous heart， there is nowhere you can rest except in the fourfold hell．





Do not regard this rotten body of yours as stable．The lightning streak is the simile for its unstable nature．Without ever bend－ ing this body towards any evil deed，always strive on to do skilful deeds without delay．






In shooting an arrow in the darkness of a night at a hair of a horse＇s tail from afar，if you miss the flash of lightning－you have missed the target ${ }^{4}$ ．Now that you have got this body which is comparable to a lightning streak，if you neglect skilful deeds you will miss the chance of winning heaven and Nibbāna．

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For Death－there is no hindrance anywhere．Isn＇t it a fact that all these pleasures last only so long as one has merits？Without believing in the words of the Buddha which bring samsaric sufferings to and end，what is the use of dancing－of fun and frolic？




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To those who have faith，who do not like the suffering in existence there is no better opportunity than this（Buddha－ age）．If beings only knew the value of charity and morality， even an hour is worth a thousand years．






Today－even today－Death might come．How can you rest assured that Death will not come tomorrow？When will Māra with his mighty army be your guarantor ${ }^{5}$ ？Why are you so lazy in doing skilful deeds？

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For what are you always getting ready－eating and drinking and adorning yourself？Where are you going to take this body？Be diligent at all times in doing merits．Isn＇t that what takes you beyond the ocean of existence？





In order to attain the stable bliss of Emancipation by crossing the ocean of samsāra，always abstain from evil with diligence having lisened to the Buddha＇s teachings and devote yourself to skilful deeds with unremitting endeavour．








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Be ever keen on meritorious deeds，for that is what opens up the road to Nibbāna．Why don＇t you have faith in what is said for your own good？Are you going to realize the truth of it only after falling into hell？


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The birth of a Buddha which offers the prospect of the bliss of Emancipation is hard to come by even in a hundred thousand aeons．This is such an age of a Buddha．If you miss this opportu－ nity，you will find yourself helpless in the next world．



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Regard as equal your own welfare and the other＇s welfare． Have thoughts of mettā（universal love）for all living beings．If you cannot do even that much you will languish long in samsāra． How are you going to attain the peaceful bliss of Nibbāna？








A dog licks in vain a fleshless bone which has nothing in it to fill its stomach ${ }^{6}$ ．So vain are sensual pleasures for which you should not feel greedy．Though you may not see anything wrong in them，they lead only to suffering．





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An eagle which soars up into the sky with a morsel of flesh， will be pecked to death by other eagles unless it drops that piece of flesh ${ }^{7}$ ．Even so，if you crave for the five－fold plasures of sense，you will come to grief through twenty five great fears ${ }^{8}$ ．

There are the sermons of the Buddha which are so sweet to the ear．You have your ears to hear which are not at all deaf．There is no merit too，that you are unable to do．Is it only the suffering in the four hells that you cannot endure？

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As sweet as honey is evil-when you are doing it ${ }^{9}$. As scorching as fire is pain-when you suffer for it. Getting acquainted with the advice that helps you abandon that evil, leave no room for any transgression through the three doors of action.


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Far, far better it is, for beings to die righteously than to go on living unrighteously. Calling to mind this teaching of the Buddha, be ever earnest in doing merits and attain Nibbāna.


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When the drops of tears that a single being has shed in weeping for his dead mother alone is far more than the waters of all the seas taken together, why are you still attached to this cycle of recurrent births and deaths-samsāra ${ }^{10}$ ?




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The crab in the water pan revels in water sport until the fire is kindled in the fire place. If you do not shrink from pondering over that fact, you would realize that there is no true happines in sense-enjoyment.





Walking against the wind with a grass torch in hand, if one does not drop it in time, one will burn one's hand ${ }^{11}$. One might speak of sense pleasures as if they are the highest gain, but the evil deeds one commits for their sake, will mature into sufferings in hell





Like those who become humiliated by others due to wearing ornaments borrowed for a wedding ${ }^{12}$, do not be proud of your pleasures now, which last only as long as you have merits, and find yourself thrown into hell.


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Even as a robber in bondage，while being led in procession to the place of execution would pride himself on his symbolic blood－ red garlands and the death knell of tom－tom beatings，if you are greedy of the prosperity you have got，you will be tricked by Māra in the very enjoyment of the fruits of your good deeds．


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As the robber，flung from a hill－top in punishment，has no use of the resulting cool breeze to allay the heat of his body，what is the use of that wealth to you with all your evil deeds，as you drop from（the hill－top of）old age into the gaping mouth of death．


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Discerning the peril in these sensual pleasures that are so allur－ ing，go into ascetic seclusion while you are still able－bodied． Will the man who is enjoying the sweet taste of fruits at the top of the tree，stay put without climbing down，until the tree is cut down at the root？${ }^{13}$ ．




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The teachings of the Buddhas are never false．The body is unstable－have no doubt about it．Life is like the dew－drop on the tip of a blade of grass ${ }^{14}$ ．Merit is something to be done without delay．




Listen to what I say for your own good．Though you are happy now，doing evil deeds，if you get reborn among devils，goblins and ghosts，you will only hang around in hunger，unable to do any merit，due to those evil deeds．





All beings who commit evil deeds with thoughts of greed，are taken into the presence of Yama ${ }^{15}$ ，the king of the dead，and accused before his court．Then they will not be allowed to have their own way but will have to suffer tortures of hell．

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Some who are always happily enjoying various pleasures, though they may see with their own eyes the state of the evil doers and of those who do meritorious deeds, refuse to believe in it even if some one explains it, and so neglect the doing of merits. But once they end up in hell, they will have to undergo endless suffering.


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Those who eat meat, relishing its taste with joy, being ignorant of the distinction between merit and demerit, are acting unwisely. They are unable to escape the evil results of those deeds without going to hell. So give up that attachment to the taste of meat now onwards-from today itself.

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Eating greedily tasty foods, applying fragrant sandal wood paste and adorning oneself with ornaments to match, one is only playing one's comic parts in a variety-show.





With your own powers of reasoning, examine what I have to say about the nature of this unstable body. Understand with wisdom that this body with its thirty-two repulsive parts ${ }^{16}$ has no essence at all. If you neglect skilful deeds having won this opportunity of human birth, your life is useless. The day you fall into one of the 136 hells, you will realize your folly.





Due to some wish made in a past birth, you find yourself now thrown together with your near and dear ones, with whom you affectionately spend your days without separation. But when you breathe your last, all alone, your connection even with those in your own household will be broken. It is only the merit you have done that will accompany you and make you happy wherever you are reborn.





Going about with a putrid body with nothing substantial in it, you give yourself a variety entertainment-dancing and prancing. You may spend your days enjoying pleasures with your husband without leaving him. But when ferocious death comes to snatch you away, knowing the right time for your departure who will stand you surety to keep you here? Don't you think it worth your while to do some merit in time?





Why don＇t you do any meritorious deeds with faith in the refuge of the Buddha？Are you waiting for Yama to come and take you when it is the time for death？The best thing to do for the sake of a dying man－if one is wise enough－is to remind him of the meri－ torious deeds he has done．How unwise it is to weep for him－you relatives？Can you make him stay on by weeping？






Though you may weep and grieve，never again will you see him． Without developing your mind and doing any merit，why do you simply earn and hoard？What is the use of entertaining this wretched putrid body which you have to abandon and go？Listen to this sermon of mine so that you can conquer your passions and reach the city of Nibbāna．



Stuck on the hook of samsāra and oppressed again and again by old－age，your indulgence in these pleasures is like seeing a dance by the flash of lightning．Knowing this as a fact，be not lazy in doing skilful deeds．




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Do not think that charity and merit are impossible things．Rejoice in the merit done by others and thereby earn as much merit as they themselves have got．Isn＇t that what assures you of heavenly and Nibbānic bliss？





Is it not for hunger，that you eat tasty rice？Is it not for the foul smell，that you apply scent on your body？These are only medicines for the sicknesses of beings in this world．Why，then do you regard these as pleasures？





Though you proudly think that these pleasures are the highest， they are as false as a scent applied in a dream．If you do not practise the Dhamma with liberality and virtue，your Kamma will take you from the lamp to the gloom．


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When a heap of firewood is fully ablaze with fire，＇firewood＇is not the proper word for it－but＇fire＇．Even so has the Buddha brought the two together in his teaching，that to call this＇a body＇ is improper as it is nothing but＇suffering＇．




If one lives long，one will crumble up by old－age．If not，one will be swallowed up by the gaping mouth of death．Sandwiched be－ tween these two major predicaments，who will truly regard these pleasures as pleasures？

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The day your neighbour＇s house is burgled，you keep watch and ward over yours，with a cautious mind．Seeing how Death is snatching away all beings，why are you so complacently looking on，without doing skilful deeds？


ఠตงฉอง
Like the crow that perished in mid－ocean owing to its greed for the taste of meat，as it perched on the carcass of an elephant that drifted down the river，if you are greedy of the prosperity that has come your way，there is no prospect of crossing the ocean of existence for you．




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On hearing the alarming news of an invasion of foreign enemies， you desert your wife and children and resort to the forest．Why then，are you heedless in doing merits，being in full view of the approach of terrible old－age and death？




Just like a man，miserably swept down a river，would refuse to climb into the boat that is drawn near him，refusing to believe in the Dhamma that offers you the prospect of heaven and Nibbāna， why do you fall into hell and suffer？

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Just see the tortures people undergo for the sake of a measly pay，displaying their skill in crafts，dancing and risky warfare． Could you not enjoy heavenly bliss for thousands of aeons if only you would gladly observe the moral precepts in the proper way．
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జీరృ
When you are old and decrepit，you cannot stand up straight once seated，or sit down unaided once you have stood up．Then your shape will not be the same．If you wish to practise giving and do merit－be prompt．


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Your wife and children are all born due to their own merit．They live long by virtue of their own merit．What sustains them here，is the merit they themselves have done．So，all what you have is the greed（for them）in your own mind．



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Deबदُ
Your dear wife and little children for whom you are now show－ ing so much affection and care always，without establishing your－ self on any standard of morality，are comparable to the coconut shells，which are one＇s playthings in childhood．

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People are in the habit of amassing wealth as desired，taking great pains and then leaving it behind to go down into hell．They are always taking care of their wives and children who only give them suffering but never do they care for their own moral purity which offers the release of Nibbāna．





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Even if you do not get a square meal to dispel hunger or a rough piece of cloth just enough to go round your body once，calling to mind the terribly intense suffering awaiting you in hell，do not，for a moment，shrink from doing merits．




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If you are to destroy-destroy the greed hatred and delusion in your mind. If your are to dwell-dwell in a locality where there are people with faith. If you are to preach-preach a sermon that holds the prospect of heaven and Nibbāna. If you are to listenlisten to a word preached by the Supreme Sage.


True praise-is the praise of the qualities of the Buddha. True building- is the building up of one's own mind. True giving-is the giving of alms and merits. True winning-is the winning of the (fear of) the next world.





For a true hearing-hear the Buddha-word. For a perfect giving up-give up the ten unskilful states. For a perfect safeguard-guard the precepts with a pure mind. As a matter of fact to knowknow this as the time for all these.


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Like branches of the tree of samsāric suffering bearing poisonous fruits, are the evil deeds which produce their fruits in hundreds. Therefore with an undistracted mind, be glad to listen to the results of the ten unskilful deeds from now onwards.

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Hearing the Buddha's teachings, calm down your mind and give up despicable low deeds. If you destroy the lives of other beings by any method whatsoever, it will give you limitless suffering in the four hells.


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Just as frogs fallen prey into the mouth of cobras, go on eating worms with much relish, see how these people go on destroying the lives of others, while they themselves are trembling with fear caught in the jaws of terrible decay and death.

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If one steals what belongs to another，either by force or with a stealthy mind，either with his own hand or by instigating another， one will go from hell to hell，as a result of that evil deed．


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ఠబివ
The sufferings that beings undergo in this world itself，having committed theft overcome by greed，is immeasurable．Seeing all that again and again，you do not give it up and mend your ways． When are you going to have any peace of mind？


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If you are caught，you will find yourself helpless．Even if you are tortured to death，there will be no inquiry．Do not think lightly of the evils of adultery．It is a path that drags you down to hell．





Listen with attention to what I have to say！If you utter a lie even once，it can block your way to heaven and will not set you free， until it has ripened into sufferings in the terrible hell．


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Those words that you speak，ignoring the（distinction between） merit and demerit which produce their results，are like a beauti－ ful necklace that cuts the neck．Malevolent speech that brings about estrangement is slander．One is not aware now of the suf－ ferings arising out of it．

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Being enraged，do not speak harsh words like driving iron spikes in another＇s ears．If you are to speak，speak lovable words pleased in mind．Harsh speech is a serious fault．Its poisonous effect will not go down until it has given you sufferings in the next world．

ลఠబివొ

Frivolous talk which does not conduce to the good of this world of the next, which the wise from times past have abstained from, is unskilful speech. Do not indulge in it even for fun. It is a royal road to hell.

ఠఅృనిఠซึ
 โీచిఠฺ
 ఆరెతయ


Those who, on seeing others' wealth, think with intense greed; 'O! how I wish it were mine-not theirs', will have to undergo suffering in the future, due to the evil tendency of arousing such a thought.





Being hostile to people whom one does not like and wishing; 'May they perish!', is a thought of ill-will. It is a path for going down to hell. Such a thought should never be entertained.

జ జ ర อ มెత్రออత ชૈ జత ตอ
Wrong-view is the thought that takes as right, the sixty-two religious views ${ }^{17}$ which are contrary to the Dhamma declared by the Buddha as the path to Nibbāna. All those religious views are merely seeds for the growth of Samsāra.







Those who have no morality and have taken up wrong views of their own liking, burn in the cataclysmic blaze of the holocaust at the end of the aeon. As if not content with the burning in the eight great hells, they go on with the same dire experience in a region outside this world-system.





Even as a margosa seed ${ }^{18}$, when planted on the earth which has various tastes, yields a fruit with only the bitter taste, obscuring all other possible tastes, the words and deeds of those beings who hold wrong views and ideas, turn out to be unskilful-not at all meritorious.

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If one commits even one of these ten evil unskilful deeds or gets another to do it by means of instruction，or with a word of assent， or else instantly thinks the same thought with which another is doing them，before long they all will find themselves in hell．


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Without abstaining from these ten perilous unskilful deeds，if one behaves in a cruel and harsh way in this human world，he will dive deep down into the limitless ocean of suffering as if he has slipped from the top of mount Meru with nothing to check his fall in between


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The eight great hells together with the＇sword－leaf＇hells make up a total of hundred and thirty six which are full of agonizing torture．Not even a Buddha can sufficiently describe the sufferings in those hells，even the thought of which drives terror．


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If the sufferings a man undergoes throughout a day when his body is pierced by three hundred spear－heads could be com－ pared to a single moment＇s suffering in hell－is not Mount Himalayas comparable to a mustard seed？





A woman who cut off a she－goat＇s head in the past had to suffer in hell with her entire body wrapped in flames，and also had her own head cut off as many times as the number of hairs on the she goat＇s body．This is the way an evil unskilful deed works its result on any one．





A man who teased a friend of his by hiding his clothes for fun only to reveal them later，suffered－alas！－for that practical joke alone，even as a god，by not getting a cloth to cover his naked－ ness．Do not，even for fun，intentionally do any act of stealing．




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One who, in the past, had indulged in adultery again and again, is still being boiled alive in the hell of melting lead-pots, diving down with shrieks and surfacing only once in every 30,000 years. The wise who wish for their own welfare, never commit such evil deeds.


A king who uttered a lie under temptation, lost his psychic powers immediately and went down into hell in his human body as the earth opened up to let him in. So, let beings in this world know that lying is bad.


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A person who estranged two monks by slander, got burnt in the hell for an aeon and suffered further as a peta with a rotten face. Do not speak a word of slander from today onwards.






A monk who, in the past abused the sangha in harsh words, fell into hell and having remained there until the earth grew seven gavutas (leagues), is still going through terrible sufferings as a cruel peta (ghostly being). Do not therefore speak words disagreeable to others.


If one indulges in frivolous talk, one will suffer grievous pains in hell and on returning to this world, one's words will not be accepted in an assembly even if they are true. Those who do not speak frivolous words will surely put an end to samsaric suffering.





With regard to something belonging to another, if one thinks, "I wish it were mine" one will have to suffer in bad bournes and on returning to this world, he will find all his hopes belied. So from now onwards, do not entertain such an evil thought.


The cruel state of mind called ill-will which makes one suffer in various hells, is dangerous. Do not knowingly give way to any thoughts of ill-will which make you suffer pains of disease wherever you are born.

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When one comes out having suffered for a long time in the hell, one's body will become ugly due to various diseases. One will be lacking in wisdom and one's mind will be impure. Therefore from now onwards look upon wrong view as poison




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I shall now declare the merits as the Buddha has preached them, having understood clearly the sufferings you now undergo due to various defilements accumulated life after life, so that you may get beyond samsāra. You may do well to listen to it.






That act of giving done with a thought pure in three respects ${ }^{19}$ without lazily ordering another to do it on one's behalf, giving prominence to no other motive than that of doing merit, will provide one with a treasure wherever one is reborn.





When fire enters your house and is catching hold of everything in it, it is only the things that you take out that would be of use ${ }^{20}$. Bearing this in mind, practise giving without greed. Isn't that what turns out to be fruitful for you in the future?



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You may have nothing to give except the mouthful of rice you are ready to eat. Give it to the beggar even then, so that you may not suffer in the future. The thought; 'This is enough for me. The rest I will give,' will never occur, even if you have got the splendour of sovereignity over all the countries.

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|  | องโุว |

Without believing in the words of the wicked who do no merits， cleanse your mind by removing the three taints of evil and keep－ ing the five precepts regularly and observing the eight precepts on Poya days，attain thereby Nibbāna unhindered．

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With constant endeavour cut off the root of greed．Keep your virtue as pure as moon－beams and protecting it like the yak its tail，win to the Bliss of Release before long．

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＇May all beings at all times be free from suffering！May they be immune form disease and be at ease！In amity and concord，may they attain Nibbāna proclaimed by the Buddha！＇Such meditation on Mettā（universal love）is of greater merit．


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Just see how these people do not care to think of welfare．When angry these beings inflict pain on one another．Meditation on Mettā directed towards all beings，will undoubtedly conduce to heav－ enly bliss and the Bliss of Release．


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Like gold coins lent on interest to those who are sure to return them，if you transfer to others the merit you have done，it will come back to you increased twofold and threefold．Do not，there－ fore，be lazy in giving merits





By practising the Dhamma proclaimed by the Buddha and preach－ ing it to the people out of compassion，avoid dangerous hells on account of that merit and attain both heavenly bliss and the Bliss of Release in due course．


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Being joyful as if you have met the living Buddha himself，raise your clasped hands in worship to those who know the Dhamma， and listen to it，word after word，with respectful attention．By that merit you can block the path to hell．





Always doing away with the conceit in the mind，and worship－ ping with honour again and again from the very sight of the image of the Buddha，if beings make offerings of food，flowers and lamps，that merit will show them the way to heaven and Release．



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Flowers bloom in the forests everyday in this world．Wherever they are offered，they are in honour of the Buddha．Without turn－ ing their minds even to this much merit，how can beings escape the cycle of births and deaths？

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Caring for and faithful attendance on，the Sangha－the sons－of－ the－Buddha－and one＇s parents，teachers，aged elders，the sick， and ascetics，will conduce to one＇s own health and heavenly bliss．


Examining beings in the world with one＇s wisdom and praising unstintingly the virtues of the virtuous without any discrimination against those who are unfriendly，is one of the ways in which those who are wise accumulate merit．

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One who reflects on the qualities of the Triple Gem which even by virtue of being pleased in it，takes beings beyond samsāric suffering to establish them in Nibbāna，will not have to suffer in samsāra anymore．

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Relatives cannot be of any help－other than merit itself．There is no inheritance that they can give for the future．If beings，there－ fore，reflect on the qualities of the Triple Gem in view of their own future，it is enough for their well being even if they do no other skilful deed．

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Greater than the merit one gets by offering a heap of seven kinds of gems covering the entire earth and a mansion built as high as the brahma－world with gem－set gateways flying golden flags，is the merit acquired by going to the refuge of the Buddha．





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Apart from the Three Refuges，there is no succour for you in samsara，even if you cannot live upto the teachings of the Buddha which bring boundless happiness，preventing rebirth in terrible hells．


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Without remaining lazy after listening to this Dhamma，fulfil all these meritorious deeds at all times，and eradicating completely the defilements from the mind，attain heavenly bliss and the Bliss of Release to be free from suffering in the future．


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In the past，a certain beggar on seeing the Venerable Anuruddha Thera，gave only a ladleful of rice out of what he has received． But by that merit he became a powerful king of gods named Indaka．Practise giving and do merit，O！Wise men，seeing these good consequences．





A lady who observed the precepts just one day，was reborn in heaven by that merit and is still enjoying heavenly pleasures in the company of Sakka，the king of gods，at the head of a thou－ sand heavenly nymphs excelling in beauty．Do not neglect，even for a moment，the precepts you have taken upon yourself．

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When one＇s mind is developed，getting rid of the defilements，one attains the excellent bliss of the brahma world without difficulty． It also brings Nibbāna so hard to see and conquers the hosts of Māra．The highest of all merits is indeed that of meditation．

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The transference of the merit one has done with a joyous mind， is a golden ladder to climb into the six heavens．It is the full moon risen to cool down the heat of the fear of hell．Therefore always give the merit you have done to whatever people you happen to meet





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On the occasion of the offering of Jetawana monastery to the Buddha，a man who was present there，rejoiced over the merit and thereby earned a greater merit than that millionaire（who offered it）．So what difference does it make whether one has given or not，so long as one can rejoice over it？


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A frog which calmed down its mind and was pleased at the sweet－ ness of the Buddha＇s sermon，got transfixed by a walking stick and died then and there to get a great boon of pleasures in Tãvatimsa heaven．Knowing this fact，be not lazy in listening to such a Dhamma．





A poor man with a mind pleased with faith in the Buddha offered a tiny flower of a common weed to a relic－shrine．By that merit he attained the splendour of a wheel－turning monarch thirty－five times．If one makes such offerings being free from evil unskilful mental states，one will not have to face suffering．





A man who on seeing the Buddha Vessabhu had worshipped him just once，did not have to suffer in any evil bourn for thirty－ one aeons．He enjoyed human and divine prosperity as well．Why cannot one do such a skilful deed，even if one is unable to do anything else？


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If you preach correctly the distinction between merit and de－ merit without any motive of selfish gain in terms of requisites， but with the pure compassionate intention；＇Let me take these beings beyond（the ocean of）Samsāra－the happiness you get as a result of it is inestimable．

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If one always attends on the virtuous，those good people who happen to see it，will become very friendly towards him．That attendance to personal needs by which the wise make merit，is indeed an act of immense merit－should one know what is benefi－ cial and not beneficial．


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If those who do meritorious deeds，speak in praise of them with joy so that the practice may increase，their fame will spread in the world as if the moon has arisen，wherever they are reborn． Do have faith in these words！





A man who once took the three refuges，just by virtue of that， was saved from going down into any bad bourn thirty one aeons and attained inestimable heavenly pleasures and the Bliss of Release．Why are you going through all this suffering without such a resort as the Triple Gem．





Though you are not always recollecting the qualities of the Bud－ dha due to ignorance，it is definitely a refuge for you－helpless as you are．If only you go on recollecting the qualities of the Bud－ dha with a concentrated mind，you will get happiness beyond measure．Have no doubt about it．





If beings bear in mind the great qualities of the Buddha who is supreme in the world，and recollect them with pure wisdom， Samsāric suffering will never approach them．It will certainly be a blessing for their well being．


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By the merit of composing this work 'Lo-wa"da Sangarāwa' showing the distinction between demerit and merit for those peope in the world who are ignorant of it, may beings never be deprived of the happiness they have got and always receiving help, attain the peaceful bliss of Nibbāna!





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May these verses justly composed by Maitreya Thera of Vīdāgama monastery and declared with thoughts of mettā and happiness, for the attainment of Nibbāna without hindrance, dwell in the minds of beings gladdening them for ever.

## NOTES

## Abbreviations

|  | .Dīgha Nikāya |
| :---: | :---: |
|  | . Majjhima Nikāya |
|  | Samyutta Nikāya |
|  | .Anguttara Nikāya |
|  | . Dhammapada |

1. the five groups which comprise the so-called "being"; 1. form 2. feeling 3. perception 4. preparations (formations) 5. consciousness
2. the simile of the blind-turtle; M III 169; S; (V) 455.
3. A. IV 320
4. A. I. 284
5. M. III. 187
6. M. I. 364
7. M. I. 364
8. 25 Great - fears; (1) birth (2) decay (3) disease (4) death (5) - sorrow in relation to the 3 periods, past present and future, make up 15. the other 10 are; the fears of; (1) thieves (2) enemies (3)kings
(4) water (5) fire (6) punishment (7) hells
(8) epidemics (9) self - reproach (10) other's reproach
9. M I. 366
10. A. IV 137
11. M.III 178 ff; A. I. $138 f$
12. 

| 1. head - hairs | 17. small - intestines |
| :---: | :---: |
| 2. body - hairs | 18. contents of the stomach |
| 3. nails | 19. faeces |
| 4. teeth | 20. bile |
| 5. skin | 21. phlegm |
| 6. flesh | 22. pus |
| 7. sinews | 23. blood |
| 8. bones | 24. sweat |
| 9. bone-marrow | 25. fat |
| 10. kidneys | 26. tears |
| 11. heart | 27. grease |
| 12. liver | 28. spittle |
| 13. diaphragm | 29. snot |
| 14.spleen | 30. oil - of - the joints |
| 15. lungs | 31. urine |
| 16. large - intestines | 32. brain - matter. |

17. D. I. $12 f f$
18. A.I. 32
19. Purity of the thought before, during, and after the act of giving.
20. S.I. 31.
21. Dhp. V. 69
22. S. III 178 ff
23. M. I. 365
24. M. I. 366

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## 

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＊2．Samyutta Nikaya－AnAnthology，Part II－Wheel No，183／185－（1972）
＊3．Ideal Solitude－Wheel No，188－（1973）
＊4．The Magic of the Mind－（1974）


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＊Buddhist Publication Society，P．O．Box，61，Kandy


