

SHE-RAB DONG-BU

ཤེ་རབ་སྒྲོང་བུ།

OR

PRAJNYA DANDA

(The Tree of Wisdom)

LU-TRUB (NAGARJUNA)

EDITED AND TRANSLATED
BY
MAJOR W. L. CAMPBELL, C.I.E.,
Indian Army

CALCUTTA

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Notes to the hypertext transcription

The She-rab Dong-bu is an ethical treatise written by the illustrious Nagarjuna. Although he is celebrated as one of the most subtle thinkers that Buddhism, and indeed the world, has ever produced, this work is fairly simple and intended for a broad audience. Particularly striking is the (nearly rabid) [misogyny](#), a feature fully in keeping with the time and place of composition, but one that we might wish not to see in the writing of the grand formulator of the Madhyamika school of philosophy.

In the original text the Tibetan and the English translation face each other on opposite pages. In this edition, only the English has been reproduced. There is also some Tibetan in the footnotes, and this is shown in Unicode and not transcribed. The only unicode font I can find at the time of publication (June 2002) that will display Tibetan (under Windows) is Arial Unicode MS Font for Publisher 2000. It is absolutely massive (about 23 MB), but it is probably one of the most complete Unicode fonts freely available. I have placed all of the combining Tibetan characters after their roots, which may not display properly in a fully-implemented Tibetan Font (which the MS Arial Unicode is not), but is the way that the characters would be transcribed and pronounced (if all of the characters were pronouncing). This may need to be corrected in a future edition.

There were three corrigenda bound into the copy that I scanned from. These have been added to the original text after the text that they are meant to replace, enclosed in brackets [].

PREFACE

The SHE-RAB DONG-BU (Tree of Wisdom) is a metrical translation in Tibetan of a Sanscrit ethical work entitled Prajnya Danda, written by Nagarjuna who flourished in the fourth century of the Buddhist era (about 100 B.C.). The Tibetan version was probably made about the 11th century of our era but the exact date has not been determined. It is included in the Ten-gyur, འཇམ་མཉམས་ section, volume འཇམ་མཉམས་, beginning at leaf 165. The Tibetan translator describes it as the second volume but I cannot say whether the remainder of the work has been preserved in Tibetan--the Sanscrit original is apparently lost.

When this work was selected as one of the textbooks for the Higher Proficiency Examination in Tibetan, the Tibetan text was edited by the late Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das and printed in continuous lines as is done in Tibet. This adds to the difficulties of the student as there is nothing to show where one verse ends and the next begins. No English translation was prepared at that time, and the present attempt has been made with the object of assisting future students of Tibetan.

The poem is known by name to the educated classes in Tibet but few laymen appear to have read it and fewer still to understand the many obscure passages. In the course of two years spent in Tibet I sought the assistance of monks and laymen in and around Gyantse but only succeeded in finding one elderly scholar who had read the poem. The Abbot of the Palkor Monastery was good enough to make enquiries at Trashi Lhunpo regarding the possible existence of a commentary on this work, but without success. By the courtesy of the Tibetan Trade Agent at Gyantse, Khenchung Lobzang Chungne Lotsawa, the printed text was compared with the xylograph edition forming part of the Ten-gyur collection in the Palkor Monastery and a number of errors detected. It must, however, be added that the Palkor text does not appear to be absolutely accurate. All that can be claimed for the present edition is that it is more correct than the earlier printed text. A number of emendations have been suggested in the foot-notes.

Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das remarked in his preface that the She-rab Dong-bu was "largely quoted by Tibetan authors" but it is hardly quotation in the ordinary sense of the word. Later writers have borrowed many of the sentiments and sometimes entire lines, inserting them in their own compositions. This is particularly the case in the Sakya Leg-she (Sans. Subhashita Ratna Niti Nama Shastra), written by the celebrated Kun-gah Gyaltsen in the 13th century of our era, which is said to be a rechauffé of the works of three earlier writers on the same subject. I mention this here as the works of Nagarjuna appear to have been not so much the subject of quotation as the source of extensive literary piracies

The present translation was made at Gyantse, but the number of passages to which no clear meaning could be assigned by the Tibetans was so great that I was in doubt whether it would be possible to proceed with publication, until I came to Gangtok and obtained the invaluable assistance of Kazi Dawa Samdup, Head Master, Bhutia Boarding School. Kazi Dawa Samdup had the advantage of receiving a scholarly explanation of the first 102 verses from a learned Lama Ge-she Kachen Tundrup of Shigatse, who studied the book some years ago and was accordingly able to give the meaning assigned by tradition to some of the passages which appear quite incomprehensible at first sight. The latter part of the translation was done without this special advantage and some of the more difficult passages remain to be properly explained. The extreme baldness of the translation is intentional.

I take this opportunity of recording my gratitude to the many Tibetan gentlemen who assisted me at the start, and above all to Kazi Dawa Samdup, without whose assistance this translation would never have seen the light. Finally I would acknowledge my obligation to the Hon'ble Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Sind the Calcutta University who have undertaken the printing of the text and translation.

W. L. CAMPBELL

GANGTOK, SIKKIM
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOT-NOTES

- S.C.D. The late Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Das
- D.S. Kazi Dawa Samdup
- P.T. The xylograph text in the Palkor Monastery at Gyantse

IN THE TIBETAN LANGUAGE

THE COMMENTARY OF MANNERS CALLED THE TREE OF WISDOM

(I DO) OBEISANCE TO THE THREE DEITIES

1. Evil persons should be brought under control.
The wise should be revered.
Fill your treasury with honest deeds
(And) protect your own countrymen.
2. (As regards) your own secrets and those of others,
If you guard these as your own dear child
He for whom all earthly things are equal
Will make love for man the principal affection.
3. If your wife is evil and your friend evil,
If the King is evil and your relatives evil,
If your neighbour is evil and the country evil,
(Then) abandon them for a distant (land).
4. Avoid* that friend who is greedy for wealth.
Avoid a wife who is fond of fornication.
If unskilful in curing and hard to please (or respect)
Avoid such a doctor.
5. Although you know the difference between good and bad deeds

You should carry out your work after consultation.
 Although you may only succeed partially
 Even without succeeding you are to be admired.

6. The steadfast who speak in few words and politely
 Are very much respected by mankind.
 As the sun which coming out from the shadow
 By his rays creates great heat.
7. (As regards) these doctiries, though you may suffer
 (Yet) be not anxious in your mind.
 When the moon has been eclipsed
 Will it not shine again?
8. Just as for the garlands on the altars
 Only full-blown flowers are gathered,
 So a gardener, in the same way,
 Does not uproot the plant.*
9. Rewards and royal favours,
 The price of prostitution and praise (from pupil),
 The hire of a boat and the rent of a dwelling,
 These may be asked for at once
 For these six are not to be had after a long interval.†
10. A magic spell misunderstood is poison.
 Indifference to illness is poison.
 An old man keeping company with woman is poison.
 A poor man's sleep in the daytime is poison.
11. Worthy men who do not make many promises,
 But if a promise is made under pressure
 Then it is like a carving on stone.
 Even should they die it is not altered.
12. You will come to terms with your enemy on occasion
 And on occasion you will quarrel with your friends.
 Having learned to distinguish what should be done and what not,
 The clever man will always select his opportunity.
13. If you sin in speech you will be damned.
 The parrot, the singing bird and the waterhen,
 The silent waterduck which man does not catch--
 Their entire accomplishment is keeping silence.

14. If you keep your weapons in order your enemy will be subdued.
 By wearing poor clothes a woman will be subdued.
 By treatment illness will be subdued.
 Ignorance will be subdued (overcome) by effort.
15. Keep your resolves to yourself as a secret,
 Like the body which lies (hid) in the mud.
 If it were not that the sprouts attract attention
 Who would find the lotus root?
16. Although it may become perceptible
 Still a non-existent substance (reality) will not be mentioned.
 How could the peacock in the painting eat the jewels?*
17. If anyone plans in his mind to do evil
 He always uses pleasant words to the other.
 When the hunter sees the game to be killed
 He sings a sweet song to please it.†
18. Whatever your thought (or opinion) may be
 It should be clearly impressed on all men's minds.
 They are thus brought under your control,
 As by the wish-granting gem.‡
19. It is easy to live by carrying the loads of others.
 It is easy to dress in tree-bark in the forest.
 It is easier for men to die
 Than to spend their days in quarrelling.
20. The root-principle of mankind is not to quarrel.
 What would you do with wealth obtained by quarrelling?
 What would you do with wealth and life
 Obtained by pride and the suppression of good.*
21. He who undertakes work which he cannot carry out,
 Who vies with the multitude and disputes with the powerful,
 Who lets a woman know his thoughts--
 The four gods of death sit at his door.†
22. Regard not an evil prince.
 Regard not deceitful relatives.
 Regard not a lustful woman.
 Regard not a great sinner.‡

23. He who can go anywhere
Why should he be injured through his attachment to his own native land?
The evil man says "it is my own well"
And saying thus, drinks the brackish water.
24. A highly learned man
Has two (forms of) felicity.
Either he will abandon all earthly interests
Or else has much which could be abandoned.*
25. He whose glory has left him (and)
Whose efforts have become meaningless,
When a holy man becomes impoverished (in this way)
He is unhappy except in a forest.†
26. The career of a holy man is of two kinds.
Like a flower waving its head
Which is either honoured by all in the world
Or else disappears alone in the forest.
27. Life, which perishes naturally in a moment,
Has this as its essence.
As your actions and intellect are undeveloped
Remain modest in society.†
28. An anthill increases by accumulation.
Similarly eye-medicine is used up by distribution.
The to-be-feared grows less by association.
That is *the* thing to understand.
29. The anthill and honey,
The waxing moon, up to the full,
The possessions of kings and beggars
Increase by gradual accumulation.
30. Do not be excessively covetous.
Great greed entails punishment.
If you are stultified by excessive covetousness
You are like the fox that was killed by the bow.*
31. He who always pursues the man who can do something for him
And pays no heed to the man who has done something
Is like the wicked man whose ear was filled with curds.
Such a one has stolen that which was guarded.†

[O, Karna, evil-minded like curdled milk,
You have conquered what you should have protected.]

32. Do not go (in search of) excessive fame.
Judge honestly for yourself.
By the fall of the 'bel' fruit into the water
See, the forest was deserted.*
33. Do not say things which hurt the feelings (of others).
Do not speak in a very injurious way.
The good man and the armed
Enemy become known.
34. Even if the son of his enemy speaks sweetly
The wise man is not indifferent.†
As a poisonous leaf is extremely potent (irresistible)
It will cause injury at any time.
35. Whosoever does benefit to his enemy
With straightforward intention,
By so doing all enemies will arrive at
The state of folding their hands in devotion.
36. In desiring to injure your enemy
Praise his inherent good qualities.
What do evil thoughts of injury do?
They injure you and not your enemy.
37. Be firm with the unruly, not with mildness
But with suitable harshness.
If the children are not diligent*
Does not the beneficent father threaten punishment?
38. As long as you watch the 'way,'
As long as your steps are steady,
As long as your wisdom is unimpaired,
So long is there profit for you.
39. If you are always seeking your own advantage
What is the use of remaining among the multitude?
There exists no means whatever for
Making all beings rejoice exceedingly.‡
40. To seek from others and yet wish for good food,

To spend your life in begging and yet have great pride,
 To be ignorant of literary works and yet wish to dispute,--
 These three make you ridiculous to others.

41. The fire which burned the forest
 Became the companion of the wind,
 And that same extinguished the fire.
 So has the weak man no friends.
42. Not doing harm to others,
 Not bowing down to low people,
 Not abandoning the path of virtue,--
 These are small (points) but (really) very many.*
43. Having no fear of disease,
 Endeavouring to associate with the holy,
 Not using the (vulgar) language of the mean,--
 A day (spent thus) is greater than a hundred years.
44. Whenever the mean find a little wealth
 They despise everybody and are filled with pride.
 But the virtuous, although they may attain the possession of wealth,
 Remain bowed like ripe rice.
45. Low class creatures,
 Should they become possessed of wealth or science,
 Think only of quarrelling with everybody
 Like the fox with the blue skin.*
46. If they become possessed of wealth or learning
 Low people become proud.
 But even when doubly honoured
 The wise man will become the more humble.
47. Trade without profit, quarrelling with those who have a following,
 Despising to beg (and thus) poor, delighting in lust,
 Using rough language to young women,--
 These five are improper conduct in a man.
48. The peacock, although scorched by heat in summer,
 Would rather hope for rain from the middle of the sky
 Than bend its proud neck to the bad water of the dirty pond.
49. The ti-ti-ra bird preserves its own life (somehow) with dew drops,

For it fears to be placed under an obligation by begging
And will not even beg from Indra.

50. If you understand Real Truth, why have a teacher?
When the disease is cured, what is the use of the doctor?
When the water is crossed, what (use) is the boatman?
What use is a sorcerer to a man without passions?*
51. As long as an evil man is weak
So long is he naturally good,
(Like) the waters of a river in autumn
Which can be easily crossed by everyone.
52. Where store is made by the mouse,
Where the cat guards the butter,
And the crow is the director of ceremonies--
How could reliance be placed in such an arrangement?*
53. If there is much discussion about anything
All make boast of their skill,
And as all wish to be placed foremost
That gathering is brought to naught.
54. Copulation by day and sleeping by day,
Fresh beer, curds and young people drinking,
Sleeping with withered old women,--
These six waste the bodily strength.
55. He whose anger causes no fear,
Who, when pleased, can confer no benefit,
Who can neither destroy nor subjugate--
What avails the anger of such a man?
56. The encounter with the time of misfortune and disease,
A time of famine and danger from enemies,
Being at the king's gate or in Yama's abode,--
These are the common remedy (i.e. affect all alike).
57. (People) strive for worldly things because they want them.
It is not done for the sake of righteousness.
Like the calf which, seeing that the milk is exhausted,
Leaves the cow at a distance.
58. Separation from the object of affection, the contempt of one's own people,

To be much in debt, association with the evil,
 To be abandoned by friends who see your poverty,
 These five are not fire yet they burn the body.*

59. He who, when small discords increase,
 Does not attempt to make peace,
 Is like the bee's honey leaking in drops,
 And the ruin of a country.†
60. He who has knowledge is firm.
 The holy, even when destitute, do not discard moral virtues,
 Although scorched by the sun's natural heat
 The natural cold of snow is not taken away.
61. Those who wish to terminate their sins believe in Buddha.
 Those who wish to terminate their earthly existences associate with the evil.
 Those who wish to terminate their families beget fools and idiots.
 When cereals are to be consumed the stomach becomes heated.
62. Those blinded by desire do not perceive their sin.
 The blind man does not see the shape of (things).
 The proud do not perceive their faults.
 He who regards himself (the egotist) does not perceive Real Truth.
63. A conqueror, a water channel, a creeping plant,
 Women and the blind, these five,
 How they are led by the crafty!
 And this leading places them in the power of others.
64. The misery which follows pleasure
 Is the pleasure which follows misery.
 The happiness and misery of mankind
 Revolve like a wheel.
65. The invivable appears before you
 And again becomes invisible.
 What is that of yours and what are you?
 Who will be miserable on that account?
66. Thus the logs of wood
 Which go down together to the great ocean
 Are driven apart by every wave.
 Who will be miserable on that account?

67. The very wise man conquers rather by forcefulness than by anger.
The evil man fails by being angry.
Oh, evil men, defeated by defeat,
How could you be called to the society of the wise?
68. A big stone, by a great effort,
May be thrown to the top of a hill,
But can be toppled over by a small (effort).
Our own faults and virtues are like this.
69. The man who, with regard to something which is not to be done,
Meddles in the matter
Will surely come to grief,
Like the monkey which turned out the child.*
70. He who has entirely forsaken his own interests
And rejoices in those of the other party
Will surely be destroyed.
How such a man resembles King Rab-mar!†
71. If an astronomer calculates from the sky
He will ascertain the paths of the moon and the stars;
But in his house the womenfolk are at variance,
And he does not perceive their various misconduct.
72. The moon's colour was apparent (reflected) in the unsullied water,
And you wished to seize the lotus root.
Oh, swan, who knew how to separate water and milk,
What has become of your knowledge to-day?*
73. Any man who has work, great or small,
And desires to do it,
And in this endeavour does his best,
Is considered to be doing a lion's work.
74. So, in protecting his kingdom
And in overcoming his venturesome rivals,
(A king) should not rely on his subjects
But do it personally in this present life.
75. He who says to himself, 'who is the loved one and who the other,'
Who acts affectionately, magnanimously
And broadmindedly, such a man
Controls the whole earthly globe.

76. By always uttering pleasant speeches
It is easy for a king to beguile his people.
But as regards profitable words, which are like medicine,
The speaker is rarer than the listener.
77. If you understand the purport of the doctrine
As when the beam is at fault when weighing is done,
Even if it was constructed by a reputed wise man,
It is better to let your own (conviction) be the winner.
78. If he is equal in wealth and ability,
If he knows the essential vital point and is diligent,
A follower of this kind is sure to injure you.
No enemy will injure you as he will.
79. If fire is lighted in water*
How is it to be extinguished?
If the fear comes from the protector
Who is there to protect you from this fear?
80. (A drum) when not adjusted, does not give forth pleasant sounds.
Even when adjusted the sound emitted is not sweet.
The world is like a small drum.
It should be so adjusted as to give forth a melodious sound.
81. The lord of the earth, being influenced by passionate desires, does not discriminate
between benefit and injury.
He conducts himself as he pleases, like a lust-maddened elephant.
Tortured by remorse, he falls over the precipice of despondent misery.
He blames those around and is ignorant of his own fault.
82. In a time of disputes a king, rather than acquire wealth,
Should preserve his life by abandoning property.
Just as when the butcher shears the sheep's fleece
(The sheep thinks) the sparing of its life to be a great gain.
83. When there is a snake at the root and an eagle above,
Monkeys climbing in the branches and the flowers surrounded by bees,
Where a resting place is provided for all savage animals,
Pay no heed to (beware of) such a sandalwood tree.
84. By whatever means you control your enemies
It is not the (physical) ability but the method (which matters).
See how the crow with the string of golden beads

Got the snake killed.*

85. He who has understanding is mighty.
What can you do with might without understanding?
How strong the lion was,
Yet he was killed by the hare.†
86. If you (want to) have proper method in your work
Consult those possessed of understanding.
What need is there to speak of obtaining health, wealth and happiness?
Even if you fail it will still look well.
87. The conduct of the morally virtuous is self-evident,
But how can it cure evil persons?
Like phlegm (? acidity) which is brought on by hot rough-tasting condiments (their
evilness) becomes very much increased.
88. The man against whom you feel anger in your heart
Is not to be admonished by words.
Catch your enemy by the feet and
Then admonish him with the weapon of words.
89. In as far as danger has not been encountered
In so far is danger to be feared.
At the time of real danger
It should be vanquished like a mistake (which is acknowledged).
90. (As regards) one who has imbibed the truth,
Is it clever to impose upon such a man?
When a man is resting on the bamboo*
[When a man is resting in the embraces of a beautiful woman]
What is brave about killing him?
91. Even when young, rejoice in the intense tranquillity of the old.
Be not proud of what you know, even when learned.
However great your glory, be forbearing in your manner.
However high you may rise, be not proud.
92. Those who ever delight to benefit all creatures
Are supreme like the lamp made from a jewel,
Which relies not on oil
Nor on the vessel nor on the wick (for its light).*
93. A doctor taking food and not digesting it,

A king speaking falsehoods, and
A man of good birth misbehaving himself,
These three are very unbecoming.

94. By association with the exalted,
Who would not become exalted?
The thread on which the flowers are strung as a garland is attached to the head.
95. He who preaches at the timely season
And speaks when opportunity arises
Will be very much remarked
And obtain worldly greatness.
96. He who is possessed of diligence, courage,
Might, wisdom, (the power) to subdue others,
And perseverance, these six virtues,
Is feared even by the gods.
97. (As regards) your former enemy, now defeated,
Trust him not even when he wishes to become your friend.
See how in the cave where the owls were gathered
The raven lit a fire and they were burned.*
98. Eating, sleeping, fearing and copulating--
Man and the brutes are alike in these.
By the practice of religion mankind is elevated
If religion is not understood, is man not on a level with the brutes?
99. Those who speak ill of religion,
Although they go and come by day,
Are like the smith's bellows:
They have breath but they are not alive.
100. Leaving the patron, Buddha,
And bowing to other gods,
Is like a fool who comes to the bank of the Ganges
And being thirsty digs a well.
101. Although you may remain in a country for a very long time
It is absolutely certain that you will have to leave
Whatever may be the difference in the parting.
The actual going cannot be avoided.
102. By compulsory separation excessive pain is infinitely caused to the mind.

- But if the giving-up is voluntary
Infinite peaceful happiness will be obtained.
103. One's desire is to be attractive and happy,
And wealth is of course pleasant.
But yet this world of existence
Is like a healthy drunken person being carried.*
104. For living beings there is no moral defilement equal to lust.
Nothing injures others as envy does,
None is so fawning as a beggar,
There is no friend or relative to equal generosity.
105. There is no eye like (that of) wisdom,
There is no darkness like spiritual darkness,
There is no enemy like disease,
There is no danger to equal death.
106. Comparing these, the most inexorable
Is death, which will certainly come.
(Therefore) let your mind be turned from desire
And rejoice in the True Religion.
107. It is well to have this friend and that gem.*
The wishing gem is real--stones are not gems.
The topaz being treated as the best (of gems),
Such a gem (causes) the ruin of the world.†
108. Whatever there be on the earth's surface, grain,
Gold, cattle and good health,
Not all these will suffice to satisfy one man.
If you understand this you will obtain tranquillity.
109. Wealth, hoarded with great pains
And fondled (handled) at intervals,
How it resembles the starving mouse (who hoards his store).
Wealth is merely a source of misery.
110. Earthly life is not stable,
Wealth and enjoyment are not stable,
Wife and child are not abiding,
(Therefore) trust in religion and (good) reputation.
111. A king is not satisfied with great riches,

A clever man is insatiable for elegant sayings,
 The ocean is never sated with water,
 The world has never enough of the sight of beauty,
 Fire is not to be satisfied with wood,
 Nor (is it possible) to satisfy a child's desires.*

112. Moral conduct, self-restraint,
 And the control of the mind,--
 Whoever bears these earnestly in mind
 And remains so, then what more does he need?
113. If you remain utterly contented
 You are far from the plane of the evil man.
 Pleasures which are bound by the ties of carnal desire
 Beget trouble at every step.
114. This so-called body, full of faults,
 Has however one great moral quality.
 Whatever it encounters in this temporal life
 Its movements (depend upon) the steersman (you).
115. The forest elephant is powerful although he lives on grass.
 The serpent, although he lives on air, is not lean.
 The ascetics who have only a little grass and fruit are not of the past (do not die).
 Thus, modesty and contentment are the only objects of attainment.
116. Where is the solitary retreat where there is not
 Vegetation and dustless water?
 The moon is the public light.
 What is the use of (personal) property?
117. The surest possession is real contentment.
 It is not difficult to earn your livelihood, whatever it may be.
 (It is like) places where there are grass, leaves and water.
 There is no place where these are not (to be found).
118. The tiger is chief of the forest and the elephant is leader.
 Make of the grass your seat and your garments of tree-bark,
 And have the fruit of the trees for food.
 The evil society of poor relations is not (real) life.
119. The man who, either in a good or bad (style),
 Adapts himself somehow to what he has
 And continues to keep his body (from impurity),

There comes a change when the smoke has dispersed.
 As regards that which (always) accompanies you,
 If you are convinced that it is your own works, then practise acts of virtue.†

128. Wealth, acquired through great misery
 Or by acts contrary to religion,
 Or by bending before your enemy,
 Such wealth is not proper wealth.*
129. The holy man who is very firm in his longing to act nobly
 Is always miserable through the fear of being decried in society.
 But the shameless man who spreads the root of perverse conduct,
 And does not discriminate between the proper and improper is happier on the
 whole.
130. He who has not the sense to distinguish between the proper and improper,
 Who has abandoned all heed and (observance of) vows,
 Who only wishes to be filled with good food,
 What difference is there between a rich man of this kind and the beasts?
131. The great source of virtues, both visible and invisible, is knowledge.
 Therefore, if you are striving to procure them.
 Take hold of wisdom in its entirety.
132. A hero is born among a hundred,
 A clever man is found among a thousand,
 But the wise hero in a hundred thousand
 May be born in a thousand (or not at all).*
133. By the wise all sciences will be studied even when they are past middle age.
 Although there may be no results in this life
 It will become easier for them to obtain such in another life.
134. Even when white-haired and wrinkled
 Learning from others should be treasured.
 Wherever the man of much learning may go
 He will not obtain the aggregate (of learning).
135. A king and an accomplished man--
 These two are not alike.
 A king is esteemed in his own country,
 An accomplished man is esteemed everywhere.
136. Although the accomplished man have faults

- Philosophers will not grieve.
Although the moon may become spotted (stained)
The firm look at it with pleasure.
137. There is no bodily ornament like accomplishments,*
There is no (physical) misery like mental worry,
There is no protection for the body like patience,
There is no relative (or friend) to equal charity.
138. Although the holy man may live far away
His virtues act as a messenger.
Through sniffing the perfume of the kitaka (flower)
The bees are attracted themselves.
139. If you are persevering in virtue
What is the use of your haughty attitude?
The cow which has no milk,
Even if a bell be attached to it, will not be purchased.
140. Our existence is short but science is of many kinds.
We may estimate life but we do not know how (long) it will be.
So, like the swan which separates milk from water,
Devote yourself to whatever you undertake.
141. Although many large stars are gleaming
And the moon too shines as an ornament of the earth, yet
Whenever the sun sets it becomes night.
Except for the sun there is no meaning attached (to the terms) 'east' and 'west'.
142. On whatever it shines
Darkness is dispelled and light produced.
The shining of the sun being supreme
What is there in the shining of the other (bodies)?
143. The man who accomplishes one single act thoroughly
Excels all sentient beings--what need for many (acts)?
As the moon, when full, lights the earth's surface--
A great multitude of stars have not this power.
144. The growth of moral virtue depends on one's self.
(The acquisition of) property depends on previous merit.
Why blame anybody for this?
145. Moral virtues are to be obtained by making an effort,

And as this effort rests with yourself,
 To say that others possess moral virtues--
 Who could endure to lead such a life?*

146. Of those who understand the meaning of the scriptures
 There are many even among the crippled.
 It is a matter for rejoicing to find the sharp-pointed sword by which the enemy is
 conquered.
147. Rich men are to be found even among the barbarians
 And there are many heroes among the beasts,
 But holy men who can explain the various truths are the rarest of all.
148. There are not sandalwood (trees) on all hills,
 Nor does one get pearls from all elephants.
 The learned who can explain the meaning of the Real
 Are not to be found everywhere.
149. Real Truth is a virtue to the talented
 But a harmful thing to those without talent.
 The water of the river is very free from impurity;
 But, entering the ocean, it becomes undrinkable.
150. The cultured delight in culture:
 The uncultured find no pleasure in it.
 The bee is attracted from the forest by the lotus.
 The frogs, although living together, are not thus.
151. The fame of the sagacious
 Increases among the sagacious themselves,
 As valuables among experts
 And heroes in battle.
152. The swan does not look well in an assemblage of hawks,
 Nor the horse among the donkeys,
 Nor the lion among the foxes,
 Nor the clever man among fools.
153. That which is placed on their heads (i.e. respected) by the great
 May be considered (merely as) a basis by the vulgar.
 As the 'chorten'* to which the learned bow
 Is used as a seat by the crows.
154. Though possessing it themselves unproclaimed

- While others have it in small measure,
Holy men delight in such moral virtue.
How remarkable is such conduct!‡
155. The virtues of the omniscient
Are comprehended only by the omniscient.
The exact weight of the earth‡
Is known only to Ta-ye.§
156. If people mutually advertise each others' virtues,
Even he who possesses none will acquire them.
But he who proclaims his own virtues,
Even were he Indra, would not be respected.*‡
157. There where the possession of learning is not respected
Why should the learned man go (thither)?
In the city of the naked Jainas‡
What would the washerman do?
158. Alas, this stupid world
Has not obtained personal independence (i.e. initiative),
But following (imitating) the doings of others
Is lost in the vessel of the unobstructed.‡
[Disappears (like a lump of copper) in a vessel of (molten) copper.]
159. Of the two, the buffoon and the clever man,
To the fool the laughter-maker is superior.
The buffoon acquires wealth
But the learned man goes empty-handed.
160. By means of various records of profitable meaning
The sage passes his time.
The indigence (consequent on) abandoning religion
May be acquired even in sleeping.
161. He who in an assembly of many persons
Makes no effort to obtain the virtues of the holy,
What is the profit in such a one being born who is driven away by his own mother's
pains?*
162. The way of the wise man is knowledge,
The way of the cuckoo is a sweet note,
The way of the ascetic is patience,
The way of a woman is perversity.‡

163. Astronomy itself and doctrinal principles,
The Eagle-spell and the repeating of spells,
(Of these) the essential meaning should be seized. ‡
Do not analyse the sound (of the words).
164. Knowledge contained in books
And wealth procured from others,
When the time for needing them arrives,
Are neither knowledge nor wealth.
165. The accomplishments of the teacher of the arts
Are but accomplishments for earning a living,
But the study of the termination of earthly incarnation
Why should that not be *the* accomplishment?
166. To no man without (due) scrutiny
Should sound advice* be given.
See, how for only giving a place to a monkey
The man was made homeless. ‡
167. Some devote themselves to speech (preaching),
Some gain their object without speaking.
The reed-flower has no fruit,
The walnut has both flower and fruit.
168. The fruit of the kataka tree
Clears all water,
But, if its name only be mentioned,
This does not cause the mud in the water to subside.
169. Although a man may be learned in written works,
Yet if he does not apply (what he knows)
(He resembles) the blind man who even with a lamp in his hand cannot see the
road.
170. Like the moon which waxes and wanes,
In having recourse to the holy or impious
A little virtue may be increased
Or vast accomplishments may be decreased.
171. It is easier to have a clever man for one's enemy
Than to be friends with the stupid (unlearned).
(As in the stories of) the protection of the Brahmin by a thief
And of the monkey who squeezed the king's eyes.*

172. The clever, the disciplined,
The contented and the truth-tellers,
It is better for such to die
Than (to live in) the kingdom of the evil.*
173. (In the matter of) a snake's venom and that of an evil man,
An evil man is more venomous than a snake,
For the snake's venom may be overcome by drugs and spells
But what can soothe the venom of an evil man?
174. Although the evil may be benefited by a hundred talents
Yet, even when happy, they use abusive language.
He who is well educated is firm.
Although poor as a faqir he will not abandon virtue.
175. The naturally evil man
Is like the weighing scales--
A little thing sends him up
And a little thing sends him down.
176. Although smeared with sandalwood, musk and camphor
The natural strong smell of garlic is not driven out.
Although many texts may be well studied
One does not drive out the natural evil in one's disposition.
177. There are no lotuses on the face of a holy man's son,
Nor do horns grow on the heads of prostitutes' sons.
But in so far as there was perversion in the act
In so far as is that the essential characteristic of the bastard.
178. The word which is uttered is one thing
And different from the thought in the mind.
Alas, then, for the crooked-minded!
Who can change this natural disposition?
179. He assiduously retains his vices
And ever discards the moral virtues.
In retaining vice and discarding virtue
The evil man resembles a strainer.
180. He who has been refuted by an evil man
Loses confidence even in the holy.
When a child's mouth has been scalded by (hot) milk
He will drink curds only after blowing on them.

181. Seeing the stars' reflection on the lake by night,
 The swan is disappointed in taking them for lotus shoots,
 So that even when he sees the real lotus shoot by day he will not eat it.
 When once refuted by a liar one will doubt even the truthful.
182. A woman's appetite is twice (that of a man),
 Her deceitfulness four times (as much),
 Her shame six times,
 And her passions eight times--so it is said.
183. Not by gifts nor by attentions,
 Not by worship nor by veneration,
 Not by (constant) association nor by assiduity,--
 By none of these is a woman to be resisted (? controlled).
184. When he was carried off by the King of the Birds
 The White Lotus Serpent God said:
 "He who tells secrets to women
 "His life is lost there and then."*
185. (By them) one's object and religion are completely destroyed,
 They create an obstacle in the attainment of salvation,
 They become the cause of all mischief.
 Rather therefore avoid other men's womenfolk.
186. If even one written verse (of truth)
 Is given by a Lama to his pupil,
 The gift given would be supreme.‡
 Such a thing is not on earth.
187. All worldly pleasures should be abandoned,
 But, if you are unable to abandon them,
 Then cling to the holy.
 That is the cure for it.
188. All desires should be abandoned,
 But, if you cannot abandon them,
 Let your desire be for salvation.
 That is the cure for it.
189. The unhelpful relative is like a stranger,
 But he who helps, even if he be an outsider, is a relative.
 Like the body and its diseases which are with us
 And the beneficial medicine of solitude.*

199. From your food, why not give about half to the beggars?
The desire and the reward which charity brings
Will be obtained at some time.†
200. Although you may get no results from your actions, still do not be grieved,
For you can still give alms from what you possess.
Leaves, flowers, fruit, water and medicines,
All these can ultimately be rendered inimitable by the power of mental dedication.*
201. (As regards wealth) which is devoid of charity and enjoyment (neither given away
nor enjoyed),
To be the owner of such wealth is to err.†
For although it is your own property
Why are you not the owner (why don't you use it)?
202. Further, this is the place (lit. earth) for action,
The beyond is the place for results.
Whatever may be done here,
That same will certainly be enjoyed there (i.e. the fruit).
203. The wealth, rank, beauty and health of others,
Why be grieved in seeing these here (below)?
If you desire these, is not the getting of the fruits
of work from the seed of virtuous action applicable to you too?‡
204. If you have possessions and do not distribute them,
What is the use of keeping them by you?
The fruit of the kimpaka
May grow, but what is its use in hunger?*
205. Whoever gives alms which do not harm others--
His various (resulting) pleasures will neither be carried away by water
Nor burned by fire nor stolen by thieves.
Such possessions will never be utterly destroyed.
206. He who does not try a remedy for the disease of Hell (i.e. of the going to Hell),†
When he reaches the place where there is no medicine
What will he do--he and his disease?
207. Holy men are seized by the snake of words which comes from the pit of savage
men.
As a means of allaying this poison
Drink the medicine of wisdom and patience.

217. The God of Death does not wait to ask whether
your (composite) works are completed or not.
Therefore do to-morrow's work to-day,
And the evening's work in the morning.
218. So long as you are healthy and produce a harvest
Which is not ruined by the great hail of disease,
And so long as your intellect is in your work,
All this is the time for heeding religious doctrines.
219. What are wreaths of flowers to donkeys and cattle?
What is delicate food to quadrupeds† and pigs?
Light to the blind or songs to the deaf?
Of what use is religious doctrine to fools?
220. So long as one is not ambitious
For so long will one's accomplishments be great.
If great ambition be entertained in the mind
How can moral attainments be controlled?*
221. So long as a man does not beg, even when the time comes,
For so long is he (styled) a glorious ascetic.
Brave, clever, of high rank and
Manly are the terms used (of a man until he begs).
222. The first inventor of anything,
How very wonderful (admirable) he is!
The water-mill having been made,
Can be managed even by a girl.
223. A sage's son may suitably die soon,
And a king's son suitably live for a long time.
For the hunter's son‡ life and death are equally unsuitable, and for the saint's son
equally convenient.
224. Then let that which exists in the beginning
For the purpose of increasing man's understanding,
Let the elegant classics be expounded by the man who understands the doctrines.
225. Words of the nature of elegant sayings
Should be collected as far as convenient.
For the temporary but supreme gift of words
Any price will be paid.

235. He who scorns the spiritual teacher (*lit.* Lama), who has given him even a single letter,
Will pass through a hundred dog-incarnations
And be reborn of low caste.
236. To whomsoever a single letter
Is given by a Lama as to a pupil,
Whatever he may hand over (in payment), there does, not exist sufficient wealth on
the earth's surface to repay this.*
237. He who brings one up, he who imparts elegant (learning),
He who imparts science,
He who feeds one and gives fearlessness,
These five are declared to be like fathers.
238. The wife of a king or of a minister,
Likewise the wife of a friend,
A brother's wife, and one's own mother,
These five are declared to be like mothers.
239. Counsel (given to) fools
Excites but does not pacify them.
He who pours out milk for a snake
Is only increasing its venom.
240. The fool, who is really a two-footed brute,
Should be specially avoided,
For, like the unseen thorn,
The pain of his words hurts.
241. If a fool sees a fool
He is more refreshed by this than by sandalwood.
If he sees a learned man
He regards him as a parricide.
242. (As regards) benefiting the evil,
Whatever you may do they are not grateful;
But if you do even a small service to a holy man,
For this he is yours to command for life.
243. All the doings of fools are like ripples on water quickly effaced.
(The doings of) a holy man are like a carving on stone.
They may be small but they are permanent.

244. Though the evil man may speak sweetly,
 Yet he is not to be trusted.
 The peacock has a sweet note,
 But for food it eats powerful poison.
245. Alas, the evil man and
 Phlegm (mucous) are really alike.
 By mildness they are excited
 And by roughness (astringent) they are soothed.
246. An evil man, gold, a drum,
 A wild horse, women and cloth
 Are controlled by beating.
 These are not vessels for elegant doings.
247. Association with the evil man is unbecoming,.
 Whether he be pleasant or obnoxious.
 As with a dog--it is unbecoming whether you play
 With him or let him lick you.
248. Wildness is worse than a serpent.
 A serpent's venom can be assuaged by drugs and spells,
 Wildness is not to be assuaged by anything.
249. The sins of the unruly (undisciplined)
 Leave their mark on the temperament.
 Whosoever mixes with the unruly
 Becomes even more unruly than they.
250. Even without noticing his father's conduct
 The son imitates him.
 From the kitaka tree
 One does not get the kurura fruit.*
251. If my father, mother, own brother
 And wife imitate me
 In whatever sin I commit,
 It is as if they had committed it.
252. This earth, the mighty ocean
 And the mountains are not a burden,
 But he who is ungrateful
 Is indeed a heavy burden.

253. He who stays in the society of those of good moral behaviour
Rejoices to benefit all evil spirits (elementals).
Although Yama is the destroyer,
Yet wise men praise him very much.
254. In the society of the clever, the disciplined,
The contented, and the truthful,
Imprisonment is a superior state.
The sovereignty of the unruly is not thus.
255. Intimacy in the society of the holy,
Conversation in the society of the learned,
And the friendship of the unselfish,*
These will cause no regrets.
256. Although for a very long time
You may not perceive the misery (caused by sin) in this world and the other world,
Yet bring your mind into harmony with religion.
257. Although a thing may afford you mental enjoyment,
Yet, if the full fruition is to be injurious, how can it be right?
If anything upsets your health
How could it be right to eat such a sweet dish?
258. That which hurts but is profitable
Is drunk by the wise like medicine.
The result, attained afterwards,
Becomes in itself incomparable.
259. If a learned king summarises the meaning (of this book)
In the beginning, the middle and the end,
It will be found to be not otherwise (than stated).
260. When the ocean shall be no more
It may be crossed in the middle, so they say.
Whether holy men exist or not
We should not transgress the moral codes.

Book II of the Commentary of Manners, called the Tree of Wisdom, written by Lu-trub, the Teacher, which has been translated* separately, is finished.

Footnotes

* Avoid *or* abandon.

* སྔོན་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་ = a watchman. སྔོན་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་སྐྱེས་པ་ is said to be one who watches or looks after something, hence (here) a gardener.

† Such five-line verses are rare in this book. སྐྱོད་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་ = selling the lower (part of the body), hence prostitution.

* This refers to the story of a man who was threading pearls in a room on the wall of which there was a painting of a peacock. The peacock came out of the picture and swallowed the pearls but no one would believe his story. (D.S.).

† The Tibetans say that this is still done by hunters.

‡ A synonym for ཡིད་ལྡན་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ལྟོ་ the usual name of the wishing gem. (Ge-she).

* D.S. prefers "Pride and violence."

† i.e., he is risking his life.

‡ The Ge-she Ka-chen Töndrup says that this is read to mean "May I not see" etc.

* The last two lines are obscure. They are compressed into one line in the S.C.D. edition but now stand as given in the P.T.

† He prefers the life of a hermit.

‡ The last two lines are obscure. The translation given above is my own, based on the text as it stands. The Ge-she considers that the text is corrupt and proposes to alter the third line to འཇོག་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་སྐྱེས་པ་ etc., and translate these lines as--

Exhaustion, subtraction and dawn to development.

(Therefore) remain in forgetfulness in the midst of it all.

བགཡ་ངས་ is now used colloquially to mean forgetfulness but I am inclined to think that it must be taken to mean 'modest' here.

* Cf. the story in the २८५५५५५५ volume ५५ leaf 165. The fox bit the bow string and was killed by the poisoned arrow.

† The two last lines of this verse are very obscure. They are possibly a reference to some story. The Ge she's explanation is to the effect that the curds are a reference to churning, and that the lines mean that a man who churns pays no heed to the butter already produced, but thinks of the butter to come.

* This refers to a story of Sanskrit origin. The noise caused by the fall of the 'bel' fruit frightened the smaller animals who communicated their fear to the larger, thus causing the forest to be deserted.

† i.e. he remains on his guard.

* For ५५५५५५५५५५ read ५५५५५५५५५५ clever or pushing. The first form is unknown the dictionares.

† i.e. whatever you do you cannot please everybody.

* i.e. really of great importance

* Refers to the story of the fox who fell into a vat of indigo and then said he was a tiger. (D.S.)

* A difficult line. Might be rendered: What is the use of a familiar spirit. to an ascetic?

* This is obviously an allusion to some story but the reference has not been traced.

* For ५५५५५५५५५५ read ५५५५५५५५५५

† Apparently a reference to a story which, however, has not been traced.

* Refers to some story which has not been traced.

† This reference has not been traced.

* This reference has not been traced.

* i.e. if water be set on fire.

* D. S. explains that the snake lived at the foot of the tree in which the crow lived who owned the beads. The crow wished to kill the snake and accordingly dropped the beads. A passer-by who wished to take the beads killed the snake in order to do so.

‡ The hare told the lion to look at his reflection in a well, and the lion fell in. One of the few stories referred to in this book which are known in Tibet.

* D. S. prefers to read སྒྲི་ཏྟ་ as bricks, but this meaning of the word appears to be modern, This line may possibly mean "when a brave man is asleep", or again སྒྲི་ཏྟ་ might be read སྒྲི་ཏྟ་ and the line translated "when a man is resting on the greensward."

* It is believed that certain jewels have the inherent quality of emitting light.

* Refers to some story which has not been traced.

* This line is obscure but may mean that the evil and stupid course is preferred.

* Here generosity is the friend and religion the gem.

‡ This verse was referred to a learned 'incarnation' in Tibet who considered that there was a reference to some story.

* Cf. Sakya Legshe (Csomo de Körös' translation), verse 9.

* This five-line verse is unusually complicated and the only verse in the book with lines of nineteen syllables. In line 3 རྩོལ་ལྟ་ is probably རྩོལ་ལྟ་ and has been translated in the latter sense.

* Or disciplined.

‡ D.S. takes the first two lines to mean that friends and kindred return home after they have seen you burned at the ghat. The translation given above seems nearer the original.

* Wealth or property in general.

* The last two lines are obscure. སྒྲིང་སྒྲིང་ལྟ་ might have been rendered as 'a genius' but appears to mean here a man who possesses both courage and learning.

* ཡོན་ཏན་ཏན་ཏན་ accomplishments, moral virtues, talents, etc. The words can be rendered in a variety of ways.

* i.e. without emulating them in endeavour.

* Sanscrit 'chaitya', a stupa.

‡ i.e. Holy men are ready to praise the lesser accomplishments of others without advertising their own superior accomplishments.

‡ Read ལྷ་ཅི་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ = measure of lightness.

§ Ananta, the serpent-god who supports the globe.

* བཅོམ་ must be a mistake. Read བཅོམ་

‡ Or those naked, without clothing.

‡ The translation of this line is due to the Ge-she. It appears to mean that worldly people are lost in the round of material things.

* For སྐྱེས་ལྷ་ལྷ་ read སྐྱེས་ལྷ་ལྷ་ D.S. translates the last two lines: He is frightened away by seeing his own mother in pain. What good is he, even if he be born a male.

‡ D.S. prefers "folly" here.

‡ For སྐྱེས་ read ལྷ་ལྷ་

* D. S. prefers 'chosen truths.'

‡ A reference which has not been traced.

* The references have not been traced.

* Or Than to share a kingdom with the wicked.

* The reference has not been traced.

‡ The text of this line appears to be very corrupt. D. S. suggests the following amended version, on which the translation given has been based: * i.e. the diseases of the body are like an unhelpful relative and solitude like a helpful outsider.

‡ This verse is rather elliptical--it is to be inferred that the evil man's excitement is to be compared to the water splashing over.

* These two admire each other at a distance.

‡ The dog has not the ability to melt the ice.

* There appears to be a superfluous 'ya-ta' at the end of this line.

‡ རྩོམ་སྐབས་ལྷ་ལྷ་ the future adjustment. Described by the Ge-she as that form of charity which brings its own reward in kind.

* བསྐྱེད་པའི་བྱ་བ་ Mental dedication of the reward of a good action to some definite object, such as the salvation of a parent. It is not the material value of the alms but the spirit in which they are given which matters. The second སྐུ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ in this line should be read སྐུ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་

‡ A ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ seems to be required at the end of this line.

‡ སྐུ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ = not apply.

* The kimpaka is described as a pretty but bitter fruit,

‡ In line 2. For གསེར་པོ་ read གསེར་པོ་

* For གསེར་པོ་ read སྐུ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་

* ཕྱོགས་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ is obscure. I have taken a secondary meaning given in the Dictionnaire Thibetain-Latin-Francais published at Hongkong in 1899.

* i.e. could foretell the time of their own death.

‡ lit. the animals which walk in a stooping position.

* For བཅུ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ read བཅུ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་

‡ For རྩེ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ read རྩེ་ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ It might also be read "seducer's son."

* Cf. [verse 135](#). The third lines are identical.

* ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་ is possibly an old form of ལྷན་པའི་བྱ་བ་

* The last two lines are obscure and the text is probably corrupt.

* The kitaka is a magic tree and the kurura a sour fruit.

* Not dry--without craving.

* i.e. from Sanscrit into Tibetan.