

Concept Note on Dhammapada for 10 days Workshop

Buddhism appeals both to the masses and to the intelligentsia. It offers milk for the babe and food for the strong. It presents one way of life to the members of the Holy Order and another to the laity. Above all, it expounds a unique Path of Enlightenment.

All these characteristics are featured in the *Dhammapada*, one of the thirty-one books that comprise the *Tripitaka*, the three Baskets which contain the quintessence of the Buddha's Teachings.

Any truth-seeker, irrespective of his religious beliefs, can read this book of Wisdom with interest and profit. By constantly reflecting on these golden sayings and by translating them into action in the course of one's daily life, a religious-minded person can gain spiritual bliss that transcends worldly he can purify himself and try to purify and enlighten others, both by example and by precept.

The *Dhammapada* is not a book to be read superficially like a novel and shelved aside. It should be read and re-read so that it may serve as a constant companion for inspiration, solace and edification in times of need.

The *Dhammapada* was not preached by the Buddha in the present form. Three months after the passing away of the Buddha, the Arahants, who assembled at the First Convocation to rehearse the Teachings of the Buddha, collected some of the poetic utterances of the Buddha, which He expounded on different occasions, arranged and classified the treatise in its present form, naming it the *Dhammapada*.

Circumstances that led to these noble utterances are presented in the form of long or short stories, together with traditional interpretations of the Pali verses and technical terms, in the voluminous commentary written by Ven'ble Buddhaghosa. This valuable commentary has been ably translated by E.W. Burlingame for the Howard Oriental Series. It may be remarked that most of these verses are better understood when read with the context.

The gems of truth embodied in these texts aptly illustrate the moral and philosophical Teachings of the Buddha.

