

The Spirituality of Buddhism

Excerpts from the Sutta Nipata and The Eight Realizations of Great Beings Sutra

Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born in northern India around 560 B.C. While originating in the Hindu (actually pre-Hindu) culture, Buddhism is not generally considered an offshoot of Hinduism (at that time, Brahmanism). In addition, Buddhism may be variously described as a religion, a philosophy, or perhaps a “non-theistic” religion. Note in the following that Dharma, or Dhamma, roughly translates to “truth”. For more, see:

<http://www.buddhismtoday.com/chung/index-eng.htm>.



Sutta Nipata I.1 Uruga Sutta The Snake

The monk who subdues his arisen anger
as, with herbs, snake-venom once it has spread,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who has cut off passion
without leaving a trace,
as he would plunging into a lake, a lotus,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who has cut off craving
without leaving a trace,
as if he had dried up a swift-flowing stream,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk who has demolished conceit
without leaving a trace,
as a great flood, a very weak bridge made of reeds,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk seeing
in states of becoming
no essence,
as he would,
when surveying a fig tree,
no flowers,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk with no inner anger,
who has thus gone beyond
becoming & not-,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk whose discursive thoughts are dispersed,
well-dealt with inside
without leaving a trace,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk who hasn't slipped past or turned back,
transcending all
this complication,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk who hasn't slipped past or turned back,
knowing with regard to the world
that "All this is unreal,"
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk who hasn't slipped past or turned back,
without greed, as "All this is unreal,"
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk who hasn't slipped past or turned back,
without aversion, as "All this is unreal,"
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk who hasn't slipped past or turned back,
without delusion, as "All this is unreal,"
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk in whom there are no latent tendencies
-- the roots of unskillfulness totally destroyed --
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

The monk in whom there's nothing born of distress
that would lead him back to this shore,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk in whom there's nothing born of desire
that would keep him bound to becoming,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.
The monk who's abandoned five hindrances,
who, untroubled, unwounded,
has crossed over doubt,
 sloughs off the near shore & far --
 as a snake, its decrepit old skin.

Sutta Nipata I.8
Karaniya Metta Sutta
Good Will

This is to be done by one skilled in aims
who wants to break through to the state of peace:
Be capable, upright, & straightforward,
easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited,
content & easy to support,
with few duties, living lightly,
with peaceful faculties, masterful,
modest, & no greed for supporters.
Do not do the slightest thing
that the wise would later censure.
Think: Happy, at rest,
may all beings be happy at heart.
Whatever beings there may be,
 weak or strong, without exception,
 long, large,
 middling, short,
 subtle, blatant,
 seen & unseen,
 near & far,
 born & seeking birth:

May all beings be happy at heart.
Let no one deceive another
or despise anyone anywhere,
or through anger or irritation
wish for another to suffer.
As a mother would risk her life
to protect her child, her only child,
even so should one cultivate a limitless heart
with regard to all beings.
With good will for the entire cosmos,
cultivate a limitless heart:
Above, below, & all around,
unobstructed, without hostility or hate.
Whether standing, walking,
sitting, or lying down,
as long as one is alert,
one should be resolved on this mindfulness.
This is called a sublime abiding
here & now.
Not taken with views,
but virtuous & consummate in vision,
having subdued desire for sensual pleasures,
one never again
will lie in the womb.

Sutta Nipata II.1
Ratana Sutta
Treasures

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
-- on the earth, in the sky --
may you all be happy
& listen intently to what I say.
Thus, spirits, you should all be attentive.
Show kindness to the human race.
Day & night they give offerings,
so, being heedful, protect them.
Whatever wealth -- here or beyond --
whatever exquisite treasure in the heavens,
does not, for us, equal the Tathagata.
This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Buddha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

The exquisite Deathless -- ending, dispassion --
discovered by the Sakyan Sage in concentration:
There is nothing to equal that Dhamma.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Dhamma.

 By this truth may there be well-being.

What the excellent Awakened One extolled as pure
and called the concentration
of unmediated knowing:

No equal to that concentration can be found.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Dhamma.

 By this truth may there be well-being.

The eight persons -- the four pairs --
praised by those at peace:

They, disciples of the One Well-Gone, deserve offerings.
What is given to them bears great fruit.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

 By this truth may there be well-being.

Those who, devoted, firm-minded,
apply themselves to Gotama's message,
on attaining their goal, plunge into the Deathless,
freely enjoying the Liberation they've gained.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

 By this truth may there be well-being.

An Indra pillar, planted in the earth,
that even the four winds cannot shake:
that, I tell you, is like the person of integrity,
who -- having comprehended
the noble truths -- sees.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

 By this truth may there be well-being.

Those who have seen clearly the noble truths
well-taught by the one of deep discernment --
regardless of what [later] might make them heedless --
will come to no eighth state of becoming.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

 By this truth may there be well-being.

At the moment of attaining sight,
one abandons three things:

 identity-views, uncertainty,

 & any attachment to precepts & practices.

One is completely released
from the four states of deprivation,
and incapable of committing
the six great wrongs.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

By this truth may there be well-being.
Whatever bad deed one may do
-- in body, speech, or in mind --
one cannot hide it:
an incapability ascribed
to one who has seen the Way.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

By this truth may there be well-being.
Like a forest grove with flowering tops
in the first month of the heat of the summer,
so is the foremost Dhamma he taught,
for the highest benefit, leading to Unbinding.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Buddha.

By this truth may there be well-being.
Foremost,
foremost-knowing,
foremost-giving,
foremost-bringing,
unexcelled, he taught the
foremost Dhamma.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Buddha.

By this truth may there be well-being.
Ended the old, there is no new taking birth.
dispassioned their minds toward further becoming,
they, with no seed, no desire for growth,
the prudent, go out like this flame.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Sangha.

By this truth may there be well-being.
Whatever spirits have gathered here,
-- on the earth, in the sky --
let us pay homage to the Buddha,
the Tathagata worshipped by beings
human & divine.

May there be
well-being.

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
-- on the earth, in the sky --
let us pay homage to the Dhamma
& the Tathagata worshipped by beings
human & divine.

May there be
well-being.

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
-- on the earth, in the sky --
let us pay homage to the Sangha
& the Tathagata worshipped by beings
human & divine.

May there be
well-being.

Sutta Nipata II.4 Maha-Mangala Sutta The Highest Protection

I have heard that at one time the Blessed One was staying in Savatthi at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's park. Then a certain deva, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, approached the Blessed One. On approaching, having bowed down to the Blessed One, she stood to one side. As she stood to one side, she addressed him with a verse.

Many devas and humans beings
give thought to protection,
desiring well-being.
Tell, then, the highest protection.

The Buddha:

Not consorting with fools,
consorting with the wise,
paying homage to those worthy of homage:

This is the highest protection.

Living in a civilized land,
having made merit in the past,
directing oneself rightly:

This is the highest protection.

Broad knowledge, skill,
well-mastered discipline,
well-spoken words:

This is the highest protection.
Support for one's parents,
assistance to one's wife and children,
consistency in one's work:

This is the highest protection.
Generosity, living in rectitude,
assistance to one's relatives,
deeds that are blameless:

This is the highest protection.
Avoiding, abstaining from evil;
refraining from intoxicants,
being heedful of the qualities of the mind:

This is the highest protection.
Respect, humility,
contentment, gratitude,
hearing the Dhamma on timely occasions:

This is the highest protection.
Patience, composure,
seeing contemplatives,
discussing the Dhamma on timely occasions:

This is the highest protection.
Austerity, celibacy,
seeing the Noble Truths,
realizing Unbinding:

This is the highest protection.
A mind that, when touched
by the ways of the world,
is unshaken, sorrowless, dustless, at rest:

This is the highest protection.
Everywhere undefeated
when acting in this way,
people go everywhere in well-being:

This is their highest protection.

Sutta Nipata IV.10
Purabheda Sutta
Before the Break-up of the Body

"Seeing how,
behaving how,
is one said to be
at peace?
Gotama, tell me about
-- when asked about --
the ultimate person."

The Buddha:

"Free from craving
before the break-up
[of the body],
independent
of *before*
& *the end*,
not classified *in between*,
no yearning is his.
Un- angered,
un- startled,
un- boastful,
un- anxious,
giving counsel unruffled,
he is a sage,
his speech
under control.
Free from attachment
with regard to the future,
not sorrowing
over the past,
he sees seclusion
in the midst of sensory contacts.
He can't be led
in terms of views.
Withdrawn, un-
deceitful, not
stingy, not
miserly, not
insolent, in-
offensive,
he doesn't engage in
divisive speech.

Not intoxicated with alluring things,
nor given to pride,
he's gentle, quick-witted,
beyond conviction & dispassion.
Not in hopes of material gain
does he take on the training;
when without material gain
he isn't upset.
Unobstructed by craving,
he doesn't through craving
 hunger for flavors.
Equanimous -- always -- mindful,
he doesn't conceive himself as
equal,
 superior,
 inferior,
 in the world.
No swellings of pride
are his.
Whose dependencies
don't exist
when, on knowing the Dhamma,
he's in-
dependent;
in whom no craving is found
for becoming or not-:
 he is said
 to be at peace,
 un-intent
 on sensual pleasures,
 with nothing at all
 to tie him down:
one who's crossed over attachment.
He has no children
 cattle,
 fields,
 land.
In him you can't pin down
 what's embraced
 or rejected,
 what's self
 or opposed to self.

He has no yearning
for that which people run-of-the-mill
or priests & contemplatives
might blame --
 which is why
he is unperturbed
with regard to their words.
His greed gone,
not miserly,
 the sage
doesn't speak of himself
as among those who are higher,
 equal,
or lower.
 He,
conjuring-free,
 doesn't submit
 to conjuring,
 to the cycling of time.
For whom
nothing in the world
is his own,
 who doesn't grieve
 over what is not,
 who doesn't enter into
 doctrines
 phenomena:
he is said
to be
at peace."

The Eight Realizations of Great Beings Sutra

As the disciples of the Buddha,
Constantly within the day and night
Sincerely chant and study
The Eight Realizations of Great Beings

First Realization

The universe is inconstant and irregular.
Territories are hazardous and fragile.
The four realms are nothing but suffering and emptiness.
The five aggregates are selfless.
Creation and termination transform and vary,
Fake and unreal, without control.
The mind is the source of evils.
The form is the assembly of crimes.
Observing all in these manners,
Gradually one parts from the cycles of life and death

Second Realization

Excessive desire leads to suffering,
The cycles of life and death, and the consequent weariness
Are rooted in greedy desires.
Lessen one's desires and eliminate ulterior motives
And the body and the mind will be at ease

Third Realization

The heart knows not and accepts not satisfaction
It is only concerned with excessive wants and pursuits
Which increases and lengthens one's evils and crimes
Bodhisattvas are not like this
They are constantly mindful of satisfaction
They are peacefully content in poverty and abide by discipline
Wisdom is their only karma.

Fourth Realization

Laziness causes downfall
Constantly exercise concentration and self-improvement
Break the evil of worry and distress
Conquer the four demons
And leave the dark world of hell

Fifth Realization

Attachment to the cycles of life and death is foolish
Constantly be mindful of the Bodhisattvas
Expand one's learning and accumulate one's knowledge
Increase and mature one's wisdom
Master the skills of discussion and debate
Teach and enlighten all
Through this way, bring forth great joy for all

Sixth Realization

When one complains frequently in poverty and hardship
Evil karma are accumulated all over
Contribute and donate like the Bodhisattvas
While doing so, be mindful of enemies and love ones
Let go of guilt over past evils
Do not hold grudge other evil people

Seventh Realization

The five desires bring about misery
Although being a common person
Do not be tampered by worldly pleasures
Be constantly mindful of the three garments of monks
And the tile bowls which are the instruments of the Dharma
Aspire to leave the common house life
Abide by the Way and be innocent and pure
Let one's noble actions excel high and afar
And be compassionate to all

Eighth Realization

The cycles of life and death burn hot
The degree of suffering and aggravation is measureless
Exert the Mahayana heart
Completely and earnestly assist all
Be willing to substitute on behalf of all living beings
To endure sufferings of measureless amount
So that all living beings
Attain absolute great joy.

These eight items
Are the realizations attained by all the great Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
Concentrate and improve on exercising the Way;
Be compassionate in practicing wisdom;
Ride the vessel of the Dharma
To the shore of Nirvana
On return to the cycles of life and death
Assist in the liberation of all living beings
The fore mentioned eight items
Will educate all
Such that all living beings
Comprehend the pain of the cycles of life and death
And give up and part from the five desires
To refine their hearts to accommodate the holy Way
If the disciples of the Buddha
Chant these eight items
Between each and every thought
Crimes of measureless proportion will be destroyed
And the pleasing Bodhi will be attained
The Sambodhi (wisdom of Buddha) will be speedily reached
The cycles of life and death will be forever broken
And one will constantly remain in happiness.