

Itivuttaka

According to the commentarial tradition, the suttas or discourses of the *Itivuttaka* were collected by the woman lay-disciple Khujjuttara from sermons, given by the Buddha, while he was staying at Kosambi. Khujjuttara was a servant of Samavati, the consort of King Udena. She had become a stream-enterer after meeting the Buddha and subsequently converted the women of the palace, headed by Samavati, to the teaching.

The Buddha's Sayings

(excerpts)

Translated from the Pali

by

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Excerpted from *The Itivuttaka: The Buddha's Sayings*, translated from the Pali by
John D. Ireland (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1997). Transcribed directly
from Microsoft Word files provided by the BPS.

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Introduction

The present work offers a translation of the Itivuttaka, a collection of 112 short discourses of the Buddha in both prose and verse. The text belongs to the Pali Canon of the Theravada

school, being placed between the Udana and the Sutta Nipata. It was previously translated by F.L. Woodward and published together with his translation of the Udana in *Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, Vol. II (London, 1935).

According to the commentarial tradition, the suttas or discourses of the Itivuttaka were collected by the woman lay-disciple Khujjuttara from sermons given by the Buddha while he was staying at Kosambi. Khujjuttara was a servant of Samavati, the consort of King Udena. She had become a stream-enterer after meeting the Buddha and subsequently converted the women of the palace headed by Samavati to the teaching. She used to go regularly to listen to the Buddha and then later repeated what she had heard to the other women.

The collection of these sayings became the Itivuttaka. It is said that the emphatic statements at the beginning and end of each of the suttas, reproduced here only in the first and last, were made by Khujjuttara to stress that they were the Buddha's words and not her own.

Whether or not this story is true, the Itivuttaka is the only book in the Pali Canon that introduces and concludes its suttas in this fashion, and it is from the opening statement that the title is derived: "This was said (*vuttam*) by the Lord ... so (*iti*) I heard" -- hence *Itivuttaka*, "The So-was-said" or "Sayings."

These "Sayings" are grouped into four unequal sections arranged, like the Anguttara Nikaya, according to the number of items they contain, from one to four. Besides these four sections -- The Ones, The Twos, The Threes, and The Fours -- the text is further subdivided into *vaggas*, groups of roughly ten suttas. But to simplify the presentation, in this translation these sub-groupings have been ignored. Only the four main sections have been retained and the suttas numbered from 1 to 112, as in the PTS edition. A number of the suttas and verses are also found in other parts of the Sutta Pi[dagger]aka, especially the Anguttara Nikaya, but many are unique to this collection.

In translating the Itivuttaka I have attempted to follow the text as closely as possible and to produce an exact and literal rendition. With the verses, however, while remaining faithful to the meaning, I occasionally found it necessary to depart from the syntax of the Pali. Although I did not attempt to produce a metrical translation, by transposing lines and words and controlling the number of syllables in the line, I aimed at producing a readable and rhythmic English rendering of the original Pali verse.

24. A Heap of Bones

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, the skeletons of a single person, running on and wandering in samsara for an aeon, would make a heap of bones, a quantity of bones as large as this Mount Vepulla, if there were someone to collect them and if the collection were not destroyed."

*The bones of a single person
Accumulated in a single aeon*

*Would make a heap like a mountain --
So said the Great Sage.
He declared it to be
As great as Mount Vepulla
To the north of Vulture's Peak
In the hill-fort of Magadha.
But when one sees with perfect wisdom
The four noble truths as they are --
Suffering, the origin of suffering,
The overcoming of suffering,
And the noble eightfold path
Leading to relief from suffering --
Having merely run on
Seven times at the most,
By destroying all fetters
One makes an end of suffering.*

25. Lying

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, I say that for an individual who transgresses in one thing, there is no evil deed whatsoever he would not do. What is that one

thing? It is this, bhikkhus: deliberately telling a lie."

*There is no evil that cannot be done
By a person who deliberately lies,
Who transgresses in one thing,
Taking no account of the next world.*

26. Giving

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, if beings knew, as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they would not eat, without having given nor would they allow the stain of meanness to obsess them and take root in their minds. Even if it were their last morsel, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared it, if there were someone to share it with. But, bhikkhus, as beings do not know, as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they eat without having given, and the stain of meanness obsesses them and takes root in their minds."

*If beings only knew --
So said the Great Sage --
How the result of sharing
Is of such great fruit,
With a gladdened mind,
Rid of the stain of meanness,
They would duly give to noble ones
Who make what is given fruitful.
Having given much food as offerings
To those most worthy of offerings,
The donors go to heaven
On departing the human state.
Having gone to heaven they rejoice,
And enjoying pleasures there,
The unselfish experience the result
Of generously sharing with others.*

27. The Development of Loving-kindness

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of loving-kindness. The mind-release of

loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant.

"Just as the radiance of all the stars does not equal a sixteenth part of the moon's radiance, but the moon's radiance surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of loving-kindness....

"Just as in the last month of the rainy season, in the autumn, when the sky is clear and free of clouds, the sun, on ascending, dispels the darkness of space and shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-release of loving-kindness....

"And just as in the night, at the moment of dawn, the morning star shines forth, bright and brilliant, even so, whatever grounds there are for making merit productive of a future birth, all these do not equal a sixteenth part of the mind-

release of loving-kindness. The mind-release of loving-kindness surpasses them and shines forth, bright and brilliant."

*For one who mindfully develops
Boundless loving-kindness
Seeing the destruction of clinging,
The fetters are worn away.
If with an uncorrupted mind
He pervades just one being
With loving kindly thoughts,
He makes some merit thereby.
But a noble one produces
An abundance of merit
By having a compassionate mind
Towards all living beings.
Those royal seers who conquered
The earth crowded with beings
Went about performing sacrifices:
The horse sacrifice, the man sacrifice,
The water rites, the soma sacrifice,
And that called "the Unobstructed."*

*But these do not share even a sixteenth part
Of a well cultivated mind of love,
Just as the entire starry host
Is dimmed by the moon's radiance.
One who does not kill
Nor cause others to kill,
Who does not conquer
Nor cause others to conquer,
Kindly towards all beings --
He has enmity for none.*

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Lord, so I heard.

42. The Bright Protectors

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, these two bright principles protect the world. What are the two? [They are] Shame and fear of wrongdoing. If, bhikkhus, these two bright principles did not protect the world, there would not be discerned respect for mother or maternal aunt or maternal uncle's wife or a teacher's wife or the wives of other honoured

persons, and the world would have fallen into promiscuity, as with goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, dogs, and jackals. But, as these two bright principles protect the world, there is discerned respect for mother ... and the wives of other honoured persons."

*Those in whom shame and fear of wrong
Are not consistently found
Have deviated from the bright root
And are led back to birth and death.
But those in whom shame and fear of wrong
Are consistently ever present,
Peaceful, mature in the holy life,
They put an end to renewal of being.*

43. The Not-born

This was said by the Lord....

"There is, bhikkhus, a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned. If, bhikkhus, there were no not-born, not-brought-to-being, not-made, not-conditioned, no escape would be discerned from what is born, brought-

to-being, made, conditioned. But since there is a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned, therefore an escape is discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned."

*The born, come-to-be, produced,
The made, the conditioned, the transient,
Conjoined with decay and death,
A nest of disease, perishable,
Sprung from nutriment and craving's cord --
That is not fit to take delight in.
The escape from that, the peaceful,
Beyond reasoning, everlasting,
The not-born, the unproduced,
The sorrow-less state that is void of stain,
The cessation of states linked to suffering,
The stilling of the conditioned -- bliss.*

44. The Nibbana-element

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, there are these two Nibbana-elements. What are the two? The Nibbana-

element with residue left and the Nibbana-element with no residue left.

"What, bhikkhus, is the Nibbana-element with residue left? Here a bhikkhu is an arahant, one whose taints are destroyed, the holy life fulfilled, who has done what had to be done, laid down the burden, attained the goal, destroyed the fetters of being, completely released through final knowledge. However, his five sense faculties remain unimpaired, by which he still experiences what is agreeable and disagreeable and feels pleasure and pain. It is the extinction of attachment, hate, and delusion in him that is called the Nibbana-element with residue left.

"Now what, bhikkhus, is the Nibbana-element with no residue left? Here a bhikkhu is an arahant ... completely released through final knowledge. For him, here in this very life, all that is experienced, not being delighted in, will be extinguished. That, bhikkhus, is called the Nibbana-element with no residue left.

"These, bhikkhus, are the two Nibbana-elements."

*These two Nibbana-elements were made known
By the Seeing One, stable and unattached:
One is the element seen here and now
With residue, but with the cord of being
destroyed;*

*The other, having no residue for the future,
Is that wherein all modes of being utterly cease.
Having understood the unconditioned state,
Released in mind with the cord of being
destroyed,*

*They have attained to the Dhamma-essence.
Delighting in the destruction (of craving),
Those stable ones have abandoned all being.*

49. Held by Views

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, held by two kinds of views, some devas and human beings hold back and some overreach; only those with vision see.

"And how, bhikkhus, do some hold back? Devas and humans enjoy being, delight in being, are satisfied with being. When Dhamma is taught to them for the cessation of being, their minds do not enter into it or acquire confidence in it or settle upon it or become resolved upon it. Thus, bhikkhus, do some hold back.

"How, bhikkhus, do some overreach? Now some are troubled, ashamed, and disgusted by this very same being and they rejoice in (the idea of) non-being, asserting: 'In as much as this self, good sirs, when the body perishes at death, is annihilated and destroyed and does not exist after death -- this is peaceful, this is excellent, this is reality!' Thus, bhikkhus, do some overreach.

"How, bhikkhus, do those with vision see? Herein a bhikkhu sees what has come to be as having come to be. Having seen it thus, he practises the course for turning away, for dispassion, for the cessation of what has come to be. Thus, bhikkhus, do those with vision see."

*Having seen what has come to be
As having come to be,
Passing beyond what has come to be,
They are released in accordance with truth
By exhausting the craving for being.
When a bhikkhu has fully understood
That which has come to be as such,
Free from craving to be this or that,
By the extinction of what has come to be
He comes no more to renewal of being.*

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Lord, so I heard.

72. Escape

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, there are these three elements of escape. What three? The escape from sensual desires, that is, renunciation; the escape from form, that is, the formless; and the escape from whatever has come to be, from whatever is conditioned and dependently arisen, that is,

cessation. These, bhikkhus, are the three elements of escape."

*Having known the escape from sensual desires
And the overcoming of forms,
One whose energy is always ardent
Reaches the stilling of all formations.
Such a bhikkhu who sees rightly
Is thereby well released.
Accomplished in knowledge, at peace,
That sage has overcome all bonds.*

75. A Rainless Cloud

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, these three kinds of persons are found existing in the world. What three? One who is like a rainless cloud, one who rains locally, and one who rains everywhere.

"Now what kind of person, bhikkhus, is like a rainless cloud? Here, a certain person is not a giver to anyone; he does not give food, drink, clothing, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, lodging, and lamps to recluses and

brahmins, to the poor, destitute, and needy. This kind of person is like a rainless cloud.

"Now, what, bhikkhus, is the kind of person who rains locally? Here, a certain person is a giver to some but not a giver to others. Food, drink, clothing, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, lodging, and lamps he gives only to some recluses and brahmins, to some of the poor, destitute, and needy, but not to others. This is the kind of person who rains locally.

"Now what, bhikkhus, is the kind of person who rains everywhere? Here, a certain person gives to all. He gives food, drink, clothing, vehicles, garlands, scents, ointments, beds, lodging, and lamps to all recluses and brahmins, to the poor, destitute, and needy. This is the kind of person who rains everywhere.

"These, bhikkhus, are the three kinds of persons found existing in the world."

*Neither to recluses nor brahmins
Nor to the poor and destitute
Does he distribute his store*

*Of food and drink and goods;
That base person is called
"One like a rainless cloud."
To some he does not give,
To some he offers alms;
That one wise people call
"One who rains only locally."
A person renowned for his bounty,
Compassionate towards all beings,
Distributes alms gladly.
"Give! Give!" he says.
Like a great storm cloud
That thunders and rains down
Filling the levels and hollows,
Saturating the earth with water,
Even so is such a person.
Having righteously gathered wealth
Which he obtains by his own effort,
He fully satisfies with food and drink
Whatever beings live in need.*

82. Joyous Utterances

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, among the devas, these three joyous utterances are proclaimed from time to time upon certain occasions. What three?

"At the time when a noble disciple, having had his hair and beard shaved off and having clothed himself in the yellow robe, intends going forth from home into homelessness, at that time among the devas the joyous utterance is proclaimed: 'A noble disciple intends to do battle with Mara.' This is the first joyous utterance proclaimed, among the devas, from time to time, upon a certain occasion.

"Again, bhikkhus, at the time when a noble disciple lives engaged in cultivating the seven groups of the requisites of enlightenment, at that time, among the devas, the joyous utterance is proclaimed: 'A noble disciple is doing battle with Mara.' This is the second joyous utterance proclaimed, among the devas, from time to time upon a certain occasion.

"And again, bhikkhus, at the time when a noble disciple, through realization by his own direct knowledge, here and now enters and abides in

the mind-release and wisdom-release that is taintless by the destruction of the taints, at that time among the devas the joyous utterance is proclaimed: 'A noble disciple has won the battle. He was in the forefront of the fight and he, now, dwells victorious.' This, bhikkhus, is the third joyous utterance proclaimed among the devas from time to time, upon a certain occasion.

"These, bhikkhus, are the three joyous utterances...."

*On seeing that he has won the battle,
Even the devas honor him,
The Fully Enlightened One's disciple,
A great one free from diffidence:
"We salute you, O thoroughbred man,
You who have won a difficult conquest.
Having routed the army of Death,
You are unhindered in liberation."
Thus do the devas extol him,
The one who has attained the goal,*

*For they do not perceive in him
Ground for subjection to Death's control.*

84. For the Welfare of Many

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, these three persons appearing in the world appear for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans. What three?

"Here, bhikkhus, a Tathagata appears in the world, an Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One, possessing perfect knowledge and conduct, a sublime one, a world-knower, an unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, a teacher of devas and humans, an enlightened one, a Lord. He teaches Dhamma that is good at the outset, good in the middle, and good at the end, with its correct meaning and wording, and he proclaims the holy life in its fulfillment and complete purity. This, bhikkhus, is the first person appearing in the world who appears for the

welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans.

"Next, bhikkhus, there is a disciple of that teacher, an arahant, one whose taints are destroyed, the holy life fulfilled, who has done what had to be done, laid down the burden, attained the goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and is completely released through final knowledge. He teaches Dhamma ... and he proclaims the holy life in its fulfillment and complete purity. This, bhikkhus, is the second person appearing in the world ... for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans.

"And next, bhikkhus, there is a disciple of that teacher, a learner who is following the path, who has learnt much and is of virtuous conduct. He teaches Dhamma ... and he proclaims the holy life in its fulfillment and complete purity. This, bhikkhus, is the third person appearing in the world ... for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans.

"These, bhikkhus, are the three persons appearing in the world who appear for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of devas and humans."

*The teacher, the great sage,
Is the first in the world;
Following him is the disciple
Whose composure is perfected;
And then the learner training on the path,
One who has learnt much and is virtuous.
These three are chief amongst devas and
humans:
Illuminators, preaching Dhamma,
Opening the door to the Deathless,
They free many people from bondage.
Those who follow the path
Well taught by the unsurpassed
Caravan-leader, who are diligent
In the Sublime One's dispensation,*

*Make an end of suffering
Within this very life itself*

90. Foremost Faith

This was said by the Lord....

"Bhikkhus, there are these three foremost kinds of faith. What are the three?

"Whatever beings there are, whether footless or two-footed or four-footed, with form or without form, percipient or non-percipient or neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient, of these the Tathagata is reckoned foremost, the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One. Those who have faith in the Buddha have faith in the foremost, and for those with faith in the foremost the result will be foremost.

"Whatever states there are, whether conditioned or unconditioned, of these detachment is reckoned foremost, that is, the subduing of vanity, the elimination of thirst, the removal of reliance, the termination of the round (of rebirths), the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, Nibbana. Those who have faith in the

Dhamma of detachment have faith in the foremost, and for those with faith in the foremost the result will be foremost.

"Whatever communities or groups there are, bhikkhus, of these the Sangha of the Tathagata's disciples is reckoned foremost, that is, the four pairs of persons, the eight individuals. This Sangha of the Lord's disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, the unsurpassable field of merit for the world. Those who have faith in the Sangha have faith in the foremost, and for those with faith in the foremost the result will be foremost.

"These, bhikkhus, are the three foremost kinds of faith."

*This is foremost for those with faith,
For those who know the foremost Dhamma:
Having faith in the Buddha as foremost,
Worthy of offerings, unsurpassed;
Having faith in the Dhamma as foremost,
The peace of detachment, bliss;*

*Having faith in the Sangha as foremost,
A field of merit unsurpassed.
Distributing gifts among the foremost,
Foremost is the merit that accrues;
Foremost their life and beauty,
Fame, reputation, happiness, and strength.
The wise one who gives to the foremost,
Concentrated on the foremost Dhamma,
Whether he becomes a deva or a human,
Rejoices in his foremost attainment.*

106. With Brahma

This was said by the Lord....

"Living with Brahma are those families where, within the home, mother and father are respected by their children. Living with the early devas are those families where, within the home, mother and father are respected by their children. Living with the early teachers are those families where, within the home, mother and father are respected by their children. Living with those worthy of adoration are those families where, within the home, mother and

father are respected by their children. 'Brahma,' bhikkhus, is a term for mother and father. 'Early devas' and 'early teachers' and 'those worthy of veneration' are terms for mother and father. For what reason? Because mother and father are very helpful to their children, they take care of them and bring them up and teach them about the world."

*Mother and father are called
"Brahma," "early teachers"
And "worthy of veneration,"
Being compassionate towards
Their family of children.
Thus the wise should venerate them,
Pay them due honor,
Provide them with food and drink,
Give them clothing and a bed,
Anoint and bathe them
And also wash their feet.
When he performs such service
For his mother and his father,*

*They praise that wise person even here
And hereafter he rejoices in heaven*

109. The River Current

This was said by the Lord....

"Suppose, bhikkhus, a man was being borne along by the current of a river which seemed pleasant and agreeable. But upon seeing him, a keen-sighted man standing on the bank would call out to him: 'Hey, good man! Although you are being borne along by the current of a river that seems pleasant and agreeable, lower down there is a pool with turbulent waves and swirling eddies, with monsters and demons. On reaching that pool you will die or suffer close to death.' Then, bhikkhus, upon hearing the words of that person, that man would struggle against the current with hands and feet.

"I have made use of this simile, bhikkhus, to illustrate the meaning. And this is the meaning here: 'The current of the river' is a synonym for craving. 'Seeming pleasant and agreeable' is a synonym for the six internal sense-bases. 'The

pool lower down' is a synonym for the five lower fetters. 'Turbulent waves' is a synonym for anger and frustration. 'Swirling eddies' is a synonym for the five strands of sensual pleasure. 'Monsters and demons' is a synonym for womenfolk. 'Against the current' is a synonym for renunciation. 'Struggling with hands and feet' is a synonym for instigating energy. 'The keen-sighted man standing on the bank' is a synonym for the Tathagata, the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One."

*Desiring future security from bondage
One should abandon sensual desire
However painful this may be.
Rightly comprehending with wisdom,
Possessing a mind that is well released,
One may reach freedom step by step.
One who is a master of knowledge,
Who has lived the holy life,
Is called one gone to the world's end,
One who has reached the further shore.*

112. The World

This was said by the Lord, said by the Arahant, so I heard:

"Bhikkhus, the world has been fully understood by the Tathagata; the Tathagata is released from the world. The origin of the world has been fully understood by the Tathagata; the origin of the world has been abandoned by the Tathagata. The cessation of the world has been fully understood by the Tathagata; the cessation of the world has been realized by the Tathagata. The course leading to the cessation of the world has been fully understood by the Tathagata; the course leading to the cessation of the world has been developed by the Tathagata.

"Bhikkhus, in the world with its devas, maras, and brahmas, with its recluses and brahmins, among humankind with its princes and people, whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought, and reflected upon by the mind -- that is fully understood by the Tathagata: therefore he is called the Tathagata.

"Bhikkhus, from the night when the Tathagata awakened to unsurpassed full enlightenment until the night when he passes away into the Nibbana-element with no residue left, whatever he speaks, utters, and explains -- all that is just so and not otherwise: therefore he is called the Tathagata.

"As the Tathagata says, so he does; as the Tathagata does, so he says; therefore, he is called the Tathagata.

"In the world with its devas, maras, and brahmas, with its recluses and brahmins, among humankind with its princes and people, the Tathagata is the conqueror, unvanquished, all-seer, wielding power: therefore he is called the Tathagata."

*By knowledge of the whole world,
The whole world as it truly is,
He is released from all the world,
In all the world he is unattached.
The all-conquering heroic sage,
Freed from every bond is he;*

*He has reached that perfect peace,
Nibbana which is free from fear.
Rid of taints, he is enlightened,
Trouble-free, with doubts destroyed,
Reached the final end of deeds,
Released by clinging's full destruction.
The Enlightened One, the Lord,
A lion is he, unsurpassed;
For in the world together with its devas
He set the Brahma-wheel in motion.
Thus those devas and human beings,
Gone for refuge to the Buddha,
On meeting him pay homage to him,
The great one free from diffidence.
Tamed, of the tamed he is the best;
Calmed, of the calmed he is the seer;
Freed, of the freed he is the foremost;
Crossed, of the crossed he is the chief.
Thus do they pay him due homage,
The great one free from diffidence:
"In the world together with its devas
There is no person equaling you."*

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Lord, so I heard.

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