



# **The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of Buddha's Discourses (The Teachings of the Buddha)**

*Bhikkhu Bodhi*

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The latest volume in the *Teachings of the Buddha* series translates the most ancient layer of the Buddha's teachings, a text that matches the *Dhammapada* in its concise power and its centrality to the Buddhist tradition. Celebrated translator Bhikkhu Bodhi illuminates these verses and their canonical commentaries with elegant renderings and authoritative annotation in this landmark volume.

The Suttanipata, or “Group of Discourses” is a collection of sermons by the Buddha that includes some of the most popular suttas of the Pali Canon, such as the *Loving-Kindness Sutta* and the *Rhinoceros-Horn Sutta*. The suttas are primarily in verse, though several are in mixed prose and verse. The Suttanipata contains discourses that extol the figure of the *muni*, the illumined sage, who wanders homeless completely detached from the world. Other suttas, such as the *Discourse on Downfall* and the *Discourse on Blessings*, establish the foundations of Buddhist lay ethics. The last two chapters—the Atthakavagga (Chapter of Octads) and the Parayanavagga (The Way to the Beyond)—are considered to be among the most ancient parts of the Pali Canon. The Atthakavagga advocates a critical attitude toward views and doctrines. The Parayanavagga is a beautiful poem in which sixteen spiritual seekers travel across India to meet the Buddha and ask him profound questions pertaining to the highest goal.

The commentary, the *Paramatthajotika*, relates the background story to each sutta and explains each verse in detail. The volume includes numerous excerpts from the *Niddesa*, an ancient commentary already included in the Pali Canon, which offers detailed expositions of each verse in the *Atthakavagga*, the *Parayanavagga*, and the *Rhinoceros Horn Sutta*.

The translator provides a long, insightful introduction, a guide to the individual suttas, extensive notes, a list of parallels to the discourses of the Suttanipata, and a list of the numerical sets mentioned in the commentaries.

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