

Dhammada – A 12th century Burmese poem – translated by Kyi May Kaung

Dhammada (The Nature of Things): A Poem Dispelling Anger, by Anantathuriya.

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For someone
to rise in life
someone else
must be destroyed
this is Dhammada
the nature of things.

In his golden palace
surrounded
by pomp and courtiers
circled by
his ministers
happily residing
luxuriously, pleasantly
the great rich king is
but a bubble rising, for a while
on the ocean's surface. A lifetime
ephemeral.

Even if
out of kindness
compassion
I am not killed
but let go now --

everyone
cannot escape
Karma
everyone's strong body is
unstable
impermanent
is apt to betray one
inevitably –
all living beings.

Paying my respects
I beg of you
in Samsara, if in
future, Your Majesty and I
should meet again
an instant

I wish
no revenge, no retribution

I honor you
my King, I truly
forgive you.

Thwé thi Annissa, gnar khantar tee.

Blood is impermanent
my physical
being.

Anantathuriya

Commentary from *Burmese Classical Poems*, compiled by Friedrich V. Lustig, Buddhist Archbishop of Latvia, who lived many years in exile in Burma from the Stalinist Soviet regime:

“Anantasuriya was a chief minister in the Kingdom of Pagan (now spelled Bagan) under King Naratheinkha (1170-1173). When as a result of a palace revolution, Naratheinkha’s brother Narapatisithu seized the throne, Anantasuriya was ordered executed. On the eve of his death, he wrote this classical poem entitled *Dhammata* (The Nature of Things) which is one of the literary treasures of the world.”