

IGCSE 2019 onwards

Literature Set Texts Translations

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Note:

1. The translations given in this booklet are to help teachers and students with their study. Due to the nature of Sanskrit language, there will be other possible, and equally valid, interpretations of detail regarding the Sanskrit words and sentences. The intention is to provide appropriate guidance and support.

2. Support is also given for the set text literature study in the new videos produced for IGCSE 2019. These are provided at: www.sanskritexams.org.uk

Mahābhārata Translations

Story 1: Bhīṣma carries off three princesses

- 1 The son of Satyawatī was named Vicitravīrya.
- 2 In time, Vicitravīrya became king.
- 3 If Vicitravīrya does not take a wife, then there will not be an heir, Bhīṣma thought.
- 4 There was a self-choice ceremony.
- 5 Many princes went to the self-choice ceremony.
- 6 Having seen that, Bhīṣma also went to the self-choice ceremony.
- 7 At the self-choice ceremony, girls were carried off by Bhīṣma.
- 8 The girls (were named) Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā.
- 9 The princes were amazed and they fell to the ground.
- 10 Ambā was freed by Bhīṣma.

Story 2: The Pāṇḍavas are born

1. Having heard the deer's words Pāṇḍu thought, "How will I have any sons?"
2. But long ago when Kuntī was a girl then the sages gave her a certain mantra.
3. The sage said "A god will give you a son by means of a mantra.
4. Kuntī, having thought of the sun, spoke the mantra.
5. Having come to her the sun gave her a son.
6. The son was named Karna.
7. But he was abandoned by Kuntī.
8. In this way five sons were born by mantra.
9. Their fathers were gods.
10. They were Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva.

Story 3: King Duśyanta married Śakuntalā

1. King Duśyanta together with his soldiers ran after a deer in the forest.
2. Finally he came to wise Kaṇva's hermitage.
3. There Duśyanta saw a very beautiful girl.
4. Straight away he fell in love with her.
5. "Who are you?" Duśyanta asked.
6. "My name is Śakuntalā, the daughter of Viśvāmitra.
7. "My mother, Menakā, left me in the forest.
8. "Drink water and eat food" the girl said.
9. Soon they were married.
10. They had a son called Bharata.
11. He, having grabbed lions, played with them.
12. Duśyanta went again to the palace.
13. For a long time Bharata lived in the hermitage.
14. But in the end Bharata came to (his) father and became king.

Story 4: A vulture tests King Śibi's virtue

1. Śibi was a king.
2. One day a pigeon came to him.
3. "O wise king, a vulture will eat me," the pigeon said.
4. Śibi replied, "I will save you"
5. But the vulture, having heard the words of the king, said, "O king, since you will not give me the pigeon then give me your flesh!"
6. Śibi, having cut some flesh from his own body, gave it to that vulture.
7. But the vulture was not contented.
8. Again, flesh was cut by the king from his own body.
9. In the end the vulture became satisfied.
10. In this way the pigeon was saved.
11. The vulture said, "You are the best king in the world!"

Story 5: Arjuna defeats Karṇa

1. Arjuna made battle with Karṇa.
2. Karṇa shot arrows towards Arjuna's head.
3. At that time Arjuna's chariot sank in the mud due to Kṛṣṇa's magic.
4. Therefore Karṇa's arrow did not hit Arjuna's head.
5. But the chariot came out of the mud again.
6. Then Karṇa's chariot also sank in the mud.
7. The wheel of the chariot stuck in the mud.
8. Karṇa climbed down from the chariot and said to Arjuna "Do not shoot an arrow."
9. Arjuna knew the laws of battle.
10. Therefore he did nothing.
11. Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, "Previously, justice has never been done by Karṇa."
12. "Justice only protects the righteous man."
13. Hearing that Arjuna killed Karṇa.

Story 6: Kṛṣṇa is shot by a hunter:

1. Kṛṣṇa sat under the tree.
2. A certain hunter walked near Kṛṣṇa.
3. The two feet of Kṛṣṇa were seen in the distance by that hunter.
4. The hunter thought, 'A deer is under the tree'.
5. The hunter quickly shot an arrow.
6. The hunter's arrow entered Kṛṣṇa.
7. The hunter, having come to Kṛṣṇa, cried out with sorrow, 'O Kṛṣṇa, kill me!'
8. But Kṛṣṇa said, 'O hunter, be fearless!'
9. 'You will go to heaven.'
10. Then the hunter went to heaven.
11. Kṛṣṇa's charioteer came there.
12. The charioteer bowed to Kṛṣṇa.
13. Kṛṣṇa said to him, 'Now I depart from the world'.
14. 'Be contented.'
15. 'Perform righteousness.'
16. 'Find knowledge'.

Hitopadeśa Translations

Introduction to the Hitopadeśa - Part One

There was on the banks of the Bhāgīrathī a city named Pāṭaliputra. There was a king (नरपति) named Sudarśana (handsome), who was possessed of every lordly virtue (सर्व-स्वामि-गुण-उपेत). That king (भु-पति) once heard two verses being recited by someone:

The resolver (-उच्छेदि) of many doubts (अनेक-संशय-), the revealer (दर्शक) of invisible objects (परोक्ष-अर्थ)

The eye (लोचन) of all, is true learning (शास्त्र); he for whom that is not the case, is blind (अन्ध).

Youth (यौवन), riches (धन-संपत्ति), power (प्रभुत्व) and inconsiderateness (अविवेकता)

even, singly (एकैक), lead to disadvantage (अनर्थ), but how much more when the four are united?

Having heard this, that king, distressed in mind (उद्विग्न-मनाः) by the inattention to learning (शास्त्र-अननुष्ठान) of his own sons who were unread in literature (अनधिगत-शास्त्र) and always (नित्य) following improper courses (उन्मार्ग-गामिन), reflected (चिन्तयामास).

What benefit (अर्थ) is there through a son who is born neither wise (विद्वान) nor virtuous (धार्मिक)?

What is the use of a sightless (काण) eye (चक्षुस)? Truly (such) an eye is trouble (-पीडा) only (केवल).

Introduction to the Hitopadeśa - Part Two

Having reflected thus (एतत् चिन्तयित्वा) the king arranged (कारितवान्) an assembly of the learned (पण्डित-सभा).

The king (then) said : O Pandits, listen (श्रूयताम्). Is there anyone so learned (विद्वान्) who (is) able (समर्थ) now (इदानीम्), by instruction in moral conduct (नीति-शास्त्र-उपदेश), to bring about (कारयितुम्) the regeneration (पुनर-जन्म) of my continually wayward (उन्मार्ग-गामिन) and ignorant (अनधिगत-शास्त्र) sons ?

For:

Glass (काच) by association (-संसर्ग) with gold (काञ्चन-) acquires (यत्ते) an emerald (मारकती) lustre (द्युति);

so, by proximity to the good (सत्-संनिधान), a fool attains cleverness (प्रवीणता).

And it is said :

The mind (मति) is indeed lowered, son (तात), from association (समागम) with the low (हीन);

with equals (सम) it reaches equality (समता) ;

but with those who are distinguished (विशिष्ट) (it attains) distinction (विशिष्टता).

Hereupon (अत्रान्तरे) a great scholar named Viṣṇuśarman, like Bṛhaspati, conversant with the gist of all books on policy (सकल-नीति-शास्त्र-तत्त्व-ज्ञ), said : Sire ! These princes have been born in a high family (महा-कुल-संभूत). They are able to learn (ग्राहयितुम्) that moral conduct (नीति) through me.

The old tiger and the traveller- Part One

Once, while walking (चरन्) in the Southern forest (दक्षिण-अरण्य), I observed an old tiger (वृद्ध-व्याघ्र), who had bathed (स्नात), with kuśa- grass in his paw (कुश-हस्त), on the banks of a lake (सरस-तीर), saying : Ho, ho, traveller. Let this golden bracelet (सुवर्ण-कङ्कण) be accepted. Having heard his words (तत-वचनम्), due to the danger (भय), a person does not cultivate (भजते) his proximity (तत-पार्श्व). After that, by a certain traveller, attracted by greed (लोभ-आकृष्ट), it was observed: This arises by good luck (भाग्य); but when there is personal risk (आत्म-संदेह), the activity (प्रवृत्ति), is not to be practised (विधेय).

For:

In the acquisition of the desired (इष्ट-लोभ) from the undesired (अनिष्ट),
a fortunate (शुभ) result (गति) does not arise ;
where there is the association with poison (विष-संसर्ग),
then even ambrosia (अमृत) leads to death (मृत्यु).

But everywhere in the procuring of wealth (अर्थ-अर्जन), the activity (प्रवृत्ति) is indeed a risk (संदेह). Thus it has been said :

Not having surmounted (अनारुह्य) doubt (संशय) a man sees not good things ;
on the contrary, having overcome doubt, if he lives, he sees (them).

Therefore, I will investigate (निरूपयामि) a little (तावत्). He says aloud (प्रकाशम्): Where is your bracelet (कङ्कण)?

The tiger having stretched forth (प्रसार्य) his paw shows (दर्शयति) it. The traveller said: How (is) confidence (विश्वाम) to be placed in you, by nature a killer (मार-आत्मक)? The tiger said: Listen, traveller-fellow! (रे पान्थ).

The old tiger and the traveller - Part two

Formerly (प्राक्), of a truth, in a youthful state (यौवन-दशा), I was excessively wicked (अति-दुर-वृत्त). Through the slaughter of many cows, Brahmins, and men (अनेक-गो-ब्राह्मण-मनुष्य-वध), my numerous children are dead, and (my) wife (दाराः) (also). Now (सांप्रतम्) I am without family (निर्वंश). Therefore, by a certain virtuous (person) (धर्मिक) I was advised (उपदिष्ट) thus : Let your honour practise (आचरतु) the duty of liberality (दान-धर्म). In consequence of his advice (तद-उपदेश) now I (am) a practiser of ablutions (स्नान-शील), a bestower (of alms), old, (and) with decayed claws and teeth (गलित-नख-दन्त) and pitiful (दयावान); how (am I) not a (fit) object of confidence (विश्वाम-भूमि).

It is said :

Sacrifice, study, alms-giving (इज्या-अध्ययन-दान), self-mortification, truth, fortitude, patience, and contentment (अलोभ), this, it is said (स्मृत), (is) the eight-fold (अष्टविध) path of duty.

The former (पूर्व) four-fold class (चतुर्वर्ग) is practised (मेव्यत) even for ostentation (दम्भ);

but the latter (उत्तर) four-fold class dwells (विद्यते) only in the magnanimous (न अमहात्म).

The old tiger and the traveller - Part three

"It is to be given (दातव्यम्); whatever gift is bestowed upon the non-assistant (अन-उपकारिण), in a proper place, (देश) time, and on a worthy recipient (पात्र), that they esteem (स्मृत) a virtuous (सात्त्विक) gift."

"Therefore (तदत्र), having bathed (स्नात्वा) in the lake (सरस), accept (प्रतिगृहाण) this golden bracelet (सुवर्ण-कङ्कण)." Then, he, his confidence arisen (जात-विश्वाम), as soon as he had entered (प्रविष्ट) the lake to bathe, immediately he sank (निमग्न) into a great quagmire (महा-पङ्क), and was unable (अक्षमः) to escape (पलायितुम्). Seeing him fallen into the quagmire (पङ्क) the tiger said : Ha! You have fallen into a great quagmire, therefore I (will) lift you up (उत्थापयामि). Having been spoken to thus, and having been slowly approached, the traveller, seized (धृत) by the tiger, reflected (thus) :

"The cause (कारण) of this is not that he reads the lawbooks (धर्म-शास्त्र) and neither is it the villain's (दुरात्मन) recitation (अध्ययन) of the Veda.

Here, the innate nature (स्वभाव) alone predominates (अतिरिच्यते), just as the milk (पयस) of the cow (गवाम) is naturally (प्रकृत्या) sweet (मधुर)."

The brahmin and his faithful ichneumon - Part one

In Ujjain lived a brahmin named Māṭhara, whose wife (ब्राह्मणी), having left him in charge (अवस्थाप्य) of their little child (बाल-अपत्य), went to bathe (स्नातुम्). Now an invitation (आह्वान) came from the King for the brahmin to perform (दातुम्) a funeral oblation (श्राद्ध). Having heard that, the brahmin, because of his natural poverty (सहज-दारिद्र्य) thought: “If I do not go quickly (सत्वरम्), then someone else will receive (ग्रहीष्यति) the funeral meal. For it is said:—

The time in which it is not being done (क्रियमाण) immediately (द्विप्रम), drinks up the best part of that* (तद्रम) action (कर्मन्), whether it is taking (आदान), giving (प्रदान) or a duty (कर्तव्य).

But there is no guard (रक्षक) here for the child. What then shall I do? Be it as it may (यातु)! I have here this ichneumon (नकुल), which I have kept for a long time (चिर-काल-पालित) and cared for no differently from (निर्विशेष) my son. I will go, leaving him in charge (अवस्थाप्य) to watch over (रक्ष-अर्थ) the babe.” And so doing, he set off there.

* ie, it will not be worth doing

The brahmin and his faithful ichneumon - Part two

Afterwards, by that mongoose coming near the child, a cobra was seen and killed. Then, that mongoose, his face and paws smeared with blood (रक्त-विलिप्त-मुख-पाद), observing (वलोक्य) the brahmin coming (आयान्त), approaching quickly, rolled (लुलोठ) at his feet (चरण). Then, that Brahmin, seeing him in such a state (तथाविधम्), concluding (अवधार्य) 'My son has been eaten (भक्षित) by him', killed him.

Immediately afterwards, having approached (उपमृत्य), as soon as (यावत्) the Brahmin looked, there was the child perfectly well (सुस्थ) and the snake lying (तिष्ठति) dead. Then, having realised (निरूप्य) that the mongoose had been a helper (उपकारक), he whose action had been rashly provoked (विभावित-कृत्य), and whose heart was grief-stricken (संतप्त-चेताः), was filled with extreme (पर) dejection (विषाद).

Hence I say,

He who, having not understood (अविज्ञाय) the true cause of a situation (अर्थ-तत्त्व), falls under the influence (वश) of anger,

He is similar to the foolish Brahmin who is tormented (तप्यते) on account of the mongoose.

Arjuna said:

1.36. What delight can we derive, O Janārdana, by doing away with these sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra? Evil only would cling to us by slaying these aggressors.

Sañjaya said:

1.47. Thus having spoken on the battlefield, his heart overcome with sorrow, Arjuna sat down on the seat of his chariot, abandoning his bow and arrows.

Kṛṣṇa said:

2.3. Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pṛtha. It does not become thee. Cast off this base weakness of heart and arise, O tormentor of foes.

2.22. As a man casting off worn-out garments puts on new ones, so the embodied, casting off worn-out bodies enters into others that are new.

2.48. Perform action, O Dhanañjaya, being fixed in yoga, renouncing attachments, and even-minded in success and failure; equilibrium is verily yoga.

2.65. In tranquillity, all his sorrow is destroyed. For the intellect of the tranquil-minded is soon anchored in equilibrium.

3.19. Therefore, constantly perform your obligatory duty without attachment; for, by doing duty without attachment man verily obtains the Supreme.

3.21. Whatever a great man does is followed by others; people go by the example he sets.

3.30. Surrendering all actions to me, with your thoughts resting on Self, freed from desire and selfishness and cured of mental fever, engage in battle.

3.35. One's own duty, though imperfect, is better than the duty of another well discharged. Better death in one's own duty; the duty of another invites danger.

4.10. Freed from passion, fear and anger, filled with Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by penance in the fire of Knowledge, many have entered into My Being.

4.19. Whose doings are all devoid of design and desire for results, and whose actions are all burnt by the fire of knowledge, him, the sages call wise.

5.10. He who acts, abandoning attachment, dedicating his deeds to Brahman, is untainted by evil as a lotus leaf by water.

9.4. All this universe is pervaded by Me in My unmanifested form; all beings exist in Me, but I do not abide in them.

9.7. All beings, O Kaunteya, go to My Prakṛti at the end of a Kalpa. I generate them again at the beginning of the next Kalpa.

9.26. Whoever offers Me with devotion, a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I accept that, the pious offering of the pure in heart.

10.3. He who knows Me as unborn and beginningless, as the Great Lord of the worlds, he among mortals is undeluded and freed from all evils.

15.12. The light which residing in the sun illumines the whole world, that which is in the moon and in the fire – know that light to be Mine.

18.53. Having abandoned egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, enmity, property, free from the notion of “mine” and peaceful, he is fit for becoming Brahman.

18.56. Doing continuously all actions whatsoever, taking refuge in Me, by My grace he reaches the eternal, imperishable Abode.

