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Chapter 1

The Dhammapada (abridged)



Bronze Buddha, The American Cyclopædia

About the author...

After Buddha's death, purportedly under the guidance of Kasyapa, Buddha's disciples gathered to record orally the thoughts of their teacher in order that the insights of his spiritual truth would not be lost or changed. The resulting collection of sayings, the *Dhammapada*, was passed on from generation to generation; several versions of these verses survive as recorded in different languages. The *Dhammapada* is generally considered among the most popular and best-loved Buddhist scriptures. Max Müller says, "I cannot see any reason why we should not treat the verses of the Dhammapada, if not as the utterances of Buddha, at least as what were believed by the members of the council under Asoks, 242 B.C., to have been the utterances of the founder of their religion."¹

1. Quoted in James Freeman Clarke. *Ten Great Religions* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1871-3. xiii.

About the work...

In the *The Dhammapada: A Collection of Verses (abridged)*,² the Buddha's philosophy is presented in over 400 verses. The scripture notes that people seek pleasure for themselves but experience suffering as a direct result of seeking their self-interest. Buddha believes that suffering ceases when the self is extinguished. The experiences of each person are consequences of past thoughts and actions; consequently, enlightenment or awakening as an escape from the seemingly endless cycles of life is as precious as it is rare.

From the reading...

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought. . ."

Ideas of Interest from *The Dhammapada*

1. Explain why Buddha believes hatred will cease when the world knows we will come to an end. What is the meaning of the phrase, "we will come to an end"?
2. What is the importance of mindfulness or earnestness? Why is thoughtlessness to be feared?
3. In what ways do wise persons fashion themselves? How does a wise person differ from a foolish person?
4. Name and characterize the five "lower fetters." Which are to be cut off? Do you see any relation between the five bonds³ and the five lower fetters?
5. Describe the *Arhat*. What are the five "higher fetters" which an *Arhat* abandons?
6. Why do you think the *Bhikshu* seeks separation from this world rather than seeking to do good works and deeds within this world?
7. According to the *The Dhammapada*, how is suffering to be overcome?

2. *The Dhammapada: A Collection of Verses*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881. Translated from the Pauli by F. Max Müller. *Sacred Books of the East*. Edited by F. Max Müller. Translated by Various Oriental Scholars. Volume X, Part I.

3. The five bonds are greed, hatred, delusion, false views, and conceit. *Ed.*

8. Explain the metaphor of the tabernacle. Do you think the law mentioned throughout the *The Dhammapada* is natural law or moral law or some combination of the two?
9. Which of the following courses of action should be preeminent for you: seeking to help others with their duties or seeking to do your own duties? Explain why this is the case.
10. What do you think this verse from the *The Dhammapada* means: "... [T]here is no happiness higher than rest"?
11. Why, according to the *The Dhammapada*, should no one love anything? What does Buddha say about desire?
12. What do you think is meant by the phrase, "There is no path through the air..."?
13. Contrast the *Brahmana* (*Arhat*) with the *Bhikshu* (Mendicant).

The Reading Selection from *The Dhammapada*

Chapter I: The Twin Verses

1. All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.
2. All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.
3. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me,"—in those who harbour such thoughts hatred will never cease.
4. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me,"—in those who do not harbour such thoughts hatred will cease.
5. For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love, this is an old rule.
6. The world does not know that we must all come to an end here;—but those who know it, their quarrels cease at once.

Chapter 1. The Dhammapada (abridged)

7. He who lives looking for pleasures only, his senses uncontrolled, immoderate in his food, idle, and weak, *Mara* (the tempter) will certainly overthrow him, as the wind throws down a weak tree.
8. He who lives without looking for pleasures, his senses well controlled, moderate in his food, faithful and strong, him *Mara* will certainly not overthrow, any more than the wind throws down a rocky mountain...
13. As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind.
14. As rain does not break through a well-thatched house, passion will not break through a well-reflecting mind...
17. The evil-doer suffers in this world, and he suffers in the next; he suffers in both. He suffers when he thinks of the evil he has done; he suffers more when going on the evil path.
18. The virtuous man is happy in this world, and he is happy in the next; he is happy in both. He is happy when he thinks of the good he has done; he is still more happy when going on the good path...

Chapter II: On Earnestness

21. Earnestness is the path of immortality (*Nirvana*), thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die, those who are thoughtless are as if dead already...
23. These wise people, meditative, steady, always possessed of strong powers, attain to *Nirvana*, the highest happiness...
27. Follow not after vanity, nor after the enjoyment of love and lust! He who is earnest and meditative, obtains ample joy.
28. When the learned man drives away vanity by earnestness, he, the wise, climbing the terraced heights of wisdom, looks down upon the fools, serene he looks upon the toiling crowd, as one that stands on a mountain looks down upon them that stand upon the plain...



China, Kiangsu Province, Soochow, Library of Congress

31. A *Bhikshu* (mendicant) who delights in earnestness, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, moves about like fire, burning all his fetters, small or large.

32. A *Bhikshu* (mendicant) who delights in reflection, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, cannot fall away (from his perfect state)—he is close upon *Nirvana*.

Chapter III: Thought

33. As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back.

34. As a fish taken from his watery home and thrown on dry ground, our thought trembles all over in order to escape the dominion of *Mara* (the tempter).

35. It is good to tame the mind, which is difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it listeth; a tamed mind brings happiness...

From the reading...

“Those who are in earnest do not die, those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.”

39. If a man's thoughts are not dissipated, if his mind is not perplexed, if he has ceased to think of good or evil, then there is no fear for him while he is watchful.
40. Knowing that this body is (fragile) like a jar, and making this thought firm like a fortress, one should attack *Mara* (the tempter) with the weapon of knowledge, one should watch him when conquered, and should never rest.
41. Before long, alas! this body will lie on the earth, despised, without understanding, like a useless log.
42. Whatever a hater may do to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy, a wrongly-directed mind will do us greater mischief.
43. Not a mother, not a father will do so much, nor any other relative; a well-directed mind will do us greater service.

Chapter IV: Flowers

44. Who shall overcome this earth, and the world of *Yama* (the lord of the departed), and the world of the gods? Who shall find out the plainly shown path of virtue, as a clever man finds out the (right) flower?
45. The disciple will overcome the earth, and the world of *Yama*, and the world of the gods. The disciple will find out the plainly shown path of virtue, as a clever man finds out the (right) flower.
46. He who knows that this body is like froth, and has learnt that it is as unsubstantial as a mirage, will break the flower-pointed arrow of *Mara*, and never see the king of death.
47. Death carries off a man who is gathering flowers and whose mind is distracted, as a flood carries off a sleeping village.
48. Death subdues a man who is gathering flowers, and whose mind is distracted, before he is satiated in his pleasures.
49. As the bee collects nectar and departs without injuring the flower, or its colour or scent, so let a sage dwell in his village...
- 58, 59. As on a heap of rubbish cast upon the highway the lily will grow full of sweet perfume and delight, thus the disciple of the truly enlightened Buddha shines forth by his knowledge among those who are like rubbish, among the people that walk in darkness.



China-Burma Highway, (detail) Library of Congress

Chapter V: The Fool

60. Long is the night to him who is awake; long is a mile to him who is tired; long is life to the foolish who do not know the true law.

61. If a traveller does not meet with one who is his better, or his equal, let him firmly keep to his solitary journey; there is no companionship with a fool.

62. “These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me,” with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth? . . .

66. Fools of little understanding have themselves for their greatest enemies, for they do evil deeds which must bear bitter fruits. . . .

71. An evil deed, like newly-drawn milk, does not turn (suddenly); smouldering, like fire covered by ashes, it follows the fool. . . .

74. “May both the layman and he who has left the world think that this is done by me; may they be subject to me in everything which is to be done or is not to be done,” thus is the mind of the fool, and his desire and pride increase.

75. “One is the road that leads to wealth, another the road that leads to *Nirvana*;” if the *Bhikshu*, the disciple of Buddha, has learnt this, he will not yearn for honour, he will strive after separation from the world.

Chapter VI: The Wise Man (*Pandita*)

76. If you see an intelligent man who tells you where true treasures are to be found, who shows what is to be avoided, and administers reproofs, follow that wise man; it will be better, not worse, for those who follow him. . . .

78. Do not have evil-doers for friends, do not have low people for friends: have virtuous people for friends, have for friends the best of men. . . .

80. Well-makers lead the water (wherever they like); fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters bend a log of wood; wise people fashion themselves.

81. As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, wise people falter not amidst blame and praise.

82. Wise people, after they have listened to the laws, become serene, like a deep, smooth, and still lake.

83. Good people walk on whatever befall, the good do not prattle, longing for pleasure; whether touched by happiness or sorrow wise people never appear elated or depressed.

84. If, whether for his own sake, or for the sake of others, a man wishes neither for a son, nor for wealth, nor for lordship, and if he does not wish for his own success by unfair means, then he is good, wise, and virtuous.

85. Few are there among men who arrive at the other shore (become *Arhats*); the other people here run up and down the shore. . . .

89. Those whose mind is well grounded in the (seven) elements of knowledge, who without clinging to anything, rejoice in freedom from attachment, whose appetites have been conquered, and who are full of light, are free (even) in this world.

Chapter VII: The Venerable (*Arhat*)

90. There is no suffering for him who has finished his journey, and abandoned grief, who has freed himself on all sides, and thrown off all fetters.

91. They depart with their thoughts well-collected, they are not happy in their abode; like swans who have left their lake, they leave their house and home.

92. Men who have no riches, who live on recognised food, who have perceived void and unconditioned freedom (*Nirvana*), their path is difficult to understand, like that of birds in the air.

93. He whose appetites are stilled, who is not absorbed in enjoyment, who has perceived void and unconditioned freedom (*Nirvana*), his path is difficult to understand, like that of birds in the air.
94. The gods even envy him whose senses, like horses well broken in by the driver, have been subdued, who is free from pride, and free from appetites.
95. Such a one who does his duty is tolerant like the earth, like Indra's bolt; he is like a lake without mud; no new births are in store for him.
96. His thought is quiet, quiet are his word and deed, when he has obtained freedom by true knowledge, when he has thus become a quiet man.
97. The man who is free from credulity, but knows the uncreated, who has cut all ties, removed all temptations, renounced all desires, he is the greatest of men. . .

Chapter VIII: The Thousands

100. Even though a speech be a thousand (of words), but made up of senseless words, one word of sense is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet.
101. Even though a *Gatha* (poem) be a thousand (of words), but made up of senseless words, one word of a *Gatha* is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet.
102. Though a man recite a hundred *Gathas* made up of senseless words, one word of the law is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet.
103. If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors. . .
109. He who always greets and constantly reveres the aged, four things will increase to him, *viz.* life, beauty, happiness, power. . .
111. And he who lives a hundred years, ignorant and unrestrained, a life of one day is better if a man is wise and reflecting.
112. And he who lives a hundred years, idle and weak, a life of one day is better if a man has attained firm strength.
113. And he who lives a hundred years, not seeing beginning and end, a life of one day is better if a man sees beginning and end.
114. And he who lives a hundred years, not seeing the immortal place, a life of one day is better if a man sees the immortal place.
115. And he who lives a hundred years, not seeing the highest law, a life of one day is better if a man sees the highest law.



Chinese Built Suspension Bridge, Szechwan Province, China, (detail) Library of Congress

Chapter IX: Evil

116. If a man would hasten towards the good, he should keep his thought away from evil; if a man does what is good slothfully, his mind delights in evil.

117. If a man commits a sin, let him not do it again; let him not delight in sin: pain is the outcome of evil.

118. If a man does what is good, let him do it again; let him delight in it: happiness is the outcome of good.

119. Even an evil-doer sees happiness as long as his evil deed has not ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then does the evil-doer see evil.

120. Even a good man sees evil days, as long as his good deed has not ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then does the good man see happy days.

121. Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gather it little by little.

122. Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the wise man becomes full of good, even if he gather it little by little...

124. He who has no wound on his hand, may touch poison with his hand; poison does not affect one who has no wound; nor is there evil for one who does not commit evil.

From the reading...

“Well-makers lead the water (wherever they like); fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters bend a log of wood; good people fashion themselves.”

125. If a man offend a harmless, pure, and innocent person, the evil falls back upon that fool, like light dust thrown up against the wind.

126. Some people are born again; evil-doers go to hell; righteous people go to heaven; those who are free from all worldly desires attain *Nirvana*...

Chapter X: Punishment

129. All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death; remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter.

130. All men tremble at punishment, all men love life; remember that thou art like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter.

131. He who seeking his own happiness punishes or kills beings who also long for happiness, will not find happiness after death.

132. He who seeking his own happiness does not punish or kill beings who also long for happiness, will find happiness after death.

133. Do not speak harshly to anybody; those who are spoken to will answer thee in the same way. Angry speech is painful, blows for blows will touch thee.

134. If, like a shattered metal plate (gong), thou utter not, then thou hast reached *Nirvana*; contention is not known to thee.

135. As a cowherd with his staff drives his cows into the stable, so do Age and Death drive the life of men.

136. A fool does not know when he commits his evil deeds: but the wicked man burns by his own deeds, as if burnt by fire...

145. Well-makers lead the water (wherever they like); fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters bend a log of wood; good people fashion themselves.

Chapter XI: Old Age

146. How is there laughter, how is there joy, as this world is always burning? Why do you not seek a light, ye who are surrounded by darkness?

147. Look at this dressed-up lump, covered with wounds, joined together, sickly, full of many thoughts, which has no strength, no hold!

148. This body is wasted, full of sickness, and frail; this heap of corruption breaks to pieces, life indeed ends in death. . .

151. The brilliant chariots of kings are destroyed, the body also approaches destruction, but the virtue of good people never approaches destruction,—thus do the good say to the good.

152. A man who has learnt little, grows old like an ox; his flesh grows, but his knowledge does not grow.

153, 154. Looking for the maker of this tabernacle, I shall have to run through a course of many births, so long as I do not find (him); and painful is birth again and again. But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen; thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken, thy ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, approaching the Eternal (*visankhara, Nirvana*), has attained to the extinction of all desires.

155. Men who have not observed proper discipline, and have not gained treasure in their youth, perish like old herons in a lake without fish.

156. Men who have not observed proper discipline, and have not gained treasure in their youth, lie, like broken bows, sighing after the past.

Chapter XII: Self

157. If a man hold himself dear, let him watch himself carefully; during one at least out of the three watches⁴ a wise man should be watchful.

158. Let each man direct himself first to what is proper, then let him teach others; thus a wise man will not suffer.

159. If a man make himself as he teaches others to be, then, being himself well subdued, he may subdue (others); one's own self is indeed difficult to subdue.

160. Self is the lord of self, who else could be the lord? With self well subdued, a man finds a lord such as few can find.

4. *I.e.*, the “three watches” are when we are young, middle-aged, and old, *Ed.*

161. The evil done by oneself, self-begotten, self-bred, crushes the foolish, as a diamond breaks a precious stone.

162. He whose wickedness is very great brings himself down to that state where his enemy wishes him to be, as a creeper does with the tree which it surrounds.

163. Bad deeds, and deeds hurtful to ourselves, are easy to do; what is beneficial and good, that is very difficult to do...

165. By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another.

From the reading...

“Come, look at this glittering world, like unto a royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it, but the wise do not touch it.”

166. Let no one forget his own duty for the sake of another's, however great; let a man, after he has discerned his own duty, be always attentive to his duty...

Chapter XIII: The World

168. Rouse thyself! do not be idle! Follow the law of virtue! The virtuous rests in bliss in this world and in the next...

170. Look upon the world as a bubble, look upon it as a mirage: the king of death does not see him who thus looks down upon the world.

171. Come, look at this glittering world, like unto a royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it, but the wise do not touch it.

172. He who formerly was reckless and afterwards became sober, brightens up this world, like the moon when freed from clouds.

173. He whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds, brightens up this world, like the moon when freed from clouds.

174. This world is dark, few only can see here; a few only go to heaven, like birds escaped from the net...

178. Better than sovereignty over the earth, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all worlds, is the reward of the first step in holiness.

Chapter XIV: The Buddha (The Awakened)

179. He whose conquest is not conquered again, into whose conquest no one in this world enters, by what track can you lead him, the Awakened, the Omniscient, the trackless?



Bronze Statue of Amida Nyorai, Library of Congress, Denjiro Hasegawa, photographer

180. He whom no desire with its snares and poisons can lead astray, by what track can you lead him, the Awakened, the Omniscient, the trackless?

181. Even the gods envy those who are awakened and not forgetful, who are given to meditation, who are wise, and who delight in the repose of retirement (from the world).

182. Difficult (to obtain) is the conception of men, difficult is the life of mortals, difficult is the hearing of the True Law, difficult is the birth of the Awakened (the attainment of Buddhahood).

183. Not to commit any sin, to do good, and to purify one's mind, that is the teaching of (all) the Awakened...

185. Not to blame, not to strike, to live restrained under the law, to be moderate in eating, to sleep and sit alone, and to dwell on the highest thoughts,—this is the teaching of the Awakened.

186. There is no satisfying lusts, even by a shower of gold pieces; he who knows that lusts have a short taste and cause pain, he is wise;

187. Even in heavenly pleasures he finds no satisfaction, the disciple who is fully awakened delights only in the destruction of all desires.

188. Men, driven by fear, go to many a refuge, to mountains and forests, to groves and sacred trees.

189. But that is not a safe refuge, that is not the best refuge; a man is not delivered from all pains after having gone to that refuge.

190. He who takes refuge with Buddha, the Law, and the Church; he who, with clear understanding, sees the four holy truths:—

191. *Viz.* pain, the origin of pain, the destruction of pain, and the eightfold holy way that leads to the quieting of pain;—

192. That is the safe refuge, that is the best refuge; having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain.

193. A supernatural person (a Buddha) is not easily found, he is not born everywhere. Wherever such a sage is born, that race prospers. . . .

Chapter XV: Happiness

197. Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us! among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred!

198. Let us live happily then, free from ailments among the ailing! among men who are ailing let us dwell free from ailments!

199. Let us live happily then, free from greed among the greedy! among men who are greedy let us dwell free from greed!

200. Let us live happily then, though we call nothing our own! We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness!

201. Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy. He who has given up both victory and defeat, he, the contented, is happy.

202. There is no fire like passion; there is no losing throw like hatred; there is no pain like this body; there is no happiness higher than rest.

From the reading...

“Let, therefore, no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing, have no fetters.”

203. Hunger is the worst of diseases, the body the greatest of pains; if one knows this truly, that is *Nirvana*, the highest happiness.

204. Health is the greatest of gifts, contentedness the best riches; trust is the best of relationships, *Nirvana* the highest happiness.

205. He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and tranquility, is free from fear and free from sin, while he tastes the sweetness of drinking in the law.

206. The sight of the elect (Arya) is good, to live with them is always happiness; if a man does not see fools, he will be truly happy.

207. He who walks in the company of fools suffers a long way; company with fools, as with an enemy, is always painful; company with the wise is pleasure, like meeting with kinsfolk.

208. Therefore, one ought to follow the wise, the intelligent, the learned, the much enduring, the dutiful, the elect; one ought to follow a good and wise man, as the moon follows the path of the stars.

Chapter XVI: Pleasure

209. He who gives himself to vanity, and does not give himself to meditation, forgetting the real aim (of life) and grasping at pleasure, will in time envy him who has exerted himself in meditation.

210. Let no man ever look for what is pleasant, or what is unpleasant. Not to see what is pleasant is pain, and it is pain to see what is unpleasant.

211. Let, therefore, no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing, have no fetters.

212. From pleasure comes grief, from pleasure comes fear; he who is free from pleasure knows neither grief nor fear.

213. From affection comes grief, from affection comes fear; he who is free from affection knows neither grief nor fear.

214. From lust comes grief, from lust comes fear; he who is free from lust knows neither grief nor fear.

215. From love comes grief, from love comes fear; he who is free from love knows neither grief nor fear.

216. From greed comes grief, from greed comes fear; he who is free from greed knows neither grief nor fear.

217. He who possesses virtue and intelligence, who is just, speaks the truth, and does what is his own business, him the world will hold dear.

218. He in whom a desire for the Ineffable (*Nirvana*) has sprung up, who is satisfied in his mind, and whose thoughts are not bewildered by love, he is called *urdhvamsrotas* (carried upwards by the stream).

219. Kinsmen, friends, and lovers salute a man who has been long away, and returns safe from afar.

220. In like manner his good works receive him who has done good, and has gone from this world to the other;—as kinsmen receive a friend on his return.

Chapter XVII: Anger

221. Let a man leave anger, let him forsake pride, let him overcome all bondage! No sufferings befall the man who is not attached to name and form, and who calls nothing his own.

222. He who holds back rising anger like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver; other people are but holding the reins.

From the reading...

“Cut out the love of self, like an autumn lotus, with thy hand! ”

223. Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth!

224. Speak the truth, do not yield to anger; give, if thou art asked for little; by these three steps thou wilt go near the gods.

225. The sages who injure nobody, and who always control their body, they will go to the unchangeable place (*Nirvana*), where, if they have gone, they will suffer no more.

226. Those who are ever watchful, who study day and night, and who strive after *Nirvana*, their passions will come to an end.

227. This is an old saying, O Atula, this is not only of to-day: “They blame him who sits silent, they blame him who speaks much, they also blame him who says little; there is no one on earth who is not blamed.”

Chapter 1. *The Dhammapada (abridged)*

228. There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a man who is always blamed, or a man who is always praised...

234. The wise who control their body, who control their tongue, the wise who control their mind, are indeed well controlled...



Hong Kong Dock Workers, (detail) Library of Congress

Chapter XVIII: Impurity

... 237. Thy life has come to an end, thou art come near to death (*Yama*), there is no resting-place for thee on the road, and thou hast no provision for thy journey.

238. Make thyself an island, work hard, be wise! When thy impurities are blown away, and thou art free from guilt, thou wilt not enter again into birth and decay.

From the reading...

“There is no path through the air, a man is not a *Samana* by outward acts.”

239. Let a wise man blow off the impurities of his self, as a smith blows off the impurities of silver one by one, little by little, and from time to time.

240. As the impurity which springs from the iron, when it springs from it, destroys it; thus do a transgressor's own works lead him to the evil path.

241. The taint of prayers is non-repetition; the taint of houses, non-repair; the taint of the body is sloth; the taint of a watchman, thoughtlessness...

243. But there is a taint worse than all taints,—ignorance is the greatest taint. O mendicants! throw off that taint, and become taintless!

244. Life is easy to live for a man who is without shame, a crow hero, a mischief-maker, an insulting, bold, and wretched fellow.

245. But life is hard to live for a modest man, who always looks for what is pure, who is disinterested, quiet, spotless, and intelligent...

249. The world gives according to their faith or according to their pleasure: if a man frets about the food and the drink given to others, he will find no rest either by day or by night.

251. There is no fire like passion, there is no shark like hatred, there is no snare like folly, there is no torrent like greed.

252. The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive; a man winnows his neighbour's faults like chaff, but his own fault he hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gambler.

253. If a man looks after the faults of others, and is always inclined to be offended, his own passions will grow, and he is far from the destruction of passions.

254. There is no path through the air, a man is not a *Samana* by outward acts. The world delights in vanity, the Tathagatas (the Buddhas) are free from vanity.

255. There is no path through the air, a man is not a *Samana* by outward acts. No creatures are eternal; but the awakened (Buddha) are never shaken.

Chapter XIX: The Just

256, 257. A man is not just if he carries a matter by violence; no, he who distinguishes both right and wrong, who is learned and leads others, not by violence, but by law and equity, and who is guarded by the law and intelligent, he is called just...

261. He in whom there is truth, virtue, love, restraint, moderation, he who is free from impurity and is wise, he is called an elder.

262. An envious greedy, dishonest man does not become respectable by means of much talking only, or by the beauty of his complexion.

263. He in whom all this is destroyed, and taken out with the very root, he, when freed from hatred and wise, is called respectable.

264. Not by tonsure does an undisciplined man who speaks falsehood become a *Samana*; can a man be a *Samana* who is still held captive by desire and greediness?

265. He who always quiets the evil, whether small or large, he is called a *Samana* (a quiet man), because he has quieted all evil. . .

270. A man is not an elect (*Ariya*) because he injures living creatures; because he has pity on all living creatures, therefore is a man called *Ariya*.

271, 272. Not only by discipline and vows, not only by much learning, not by entering into a trance, not by sleeping alone, do I earn the happiness of release which no worldling can know. *Bhikshu*, be not confident as long as thou hast not attained the extinction of desires.

Chapter XX: The Way

273. The best of ways is the eightfold; the best of truths the four words; the best of virtues passionlessness; the best of men he who has eyes to see.

274. This is the way, there is no other that leads to the purifying of intelligence. Go on this way! Everything else is the deceit of *Mara* (the tempter).

275. If you go on this way, you will make an end of pain! The way was preached by me, when I had understood the removal of the thorns (in the flesh).

276. You yourself must make an effort. The *Tathagatas* (Buddhas) are only preachers. The thoughtful who enter the way are freed from the bondage of *Mara*.

277. "All created things perish," he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way to purity.

278. "All created things are grief and pain," he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way that leads to purity.

279. "All forms are unreal," he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way that leads to purity.

280. He who does not rouse himself when it is time to rise, who, though young and strong, is full of sloth, whose will and thought are weak, that lazy and idle man will never find the way to knowledge.

281. Watching his speech, well restrained in mind, let a man never commit any wrong with his body! Let a man but keep these three roads of action clear, and he will achieve the way which is taught by the wise.

282. Through zeal knowledge is gotten, through lack of zeal knowledge is lost; let a man who knows this double path of gain and loss thus place himself that knowledge may grow.

283. Cut down the whole forest (of lust), not a tree only! Danger comes out of the forest (of lust). When you have cut down both the forest (of lust) and its undergrowth, then, *Bhikshus*, you will be rid of the forest and free!

284. So long as the love of man towards women, even the smallest, is not destroyed, so long is his mind in bondage, as the calf that drinks milk is to its mother.

285. Cut out the love of self, like an autumn lotus, with thy hand! Cherish the road of peace. *Nirvana* has been shown by *Sugata* (Buddha).

286. "Here I shall dwell in the rain, here in winter and summer," thus the fool meditates, and does not think of his death.

287. Death comes and carries off that man, praised for his children and flocks, his mind distracted, as a flood carries off a sleeping village.

288. Sons are no help, nor a father, nor relations; there is no help from kinsfolk for one whom death has seized.

289. A wise and good man who knows the meaning of this, should quickly clear the way that leads to *Nirvana*.

Chapter XXI: Miscellaneous

290. If by leaving a small pleasure one sees a great pleasure, let a wise man leave the small pleasure, and look to the great.

291. He who, by causing pain to others, wishes to obtain pleasure for himself, he, entangled in the bonds of hatred, will never be free from hatred.

292. What ought to be done is neglected, what ought not to be done is done; the desires of unruly, thoughtless people are always increasing.

293. But they whose whole watchfulness is always directed to their body, who do not follow what ought not to be done, and who steadfastly do what ought to be done, the desires of such watchful and wise people will come to an end.

294. A true *Brahmana* goes scatheless, though he have killed father and mother, and two valiant kings, though he has destroyed a kingdom with all its subjects...

296. The disciples of Gotama (Buddha) are always well awake, and their thoughts day and night are always set on Buddha... 297. —on the law... 298. —on the

Chapter 1. The Dhammapada (abridged)

church... 299. —on the body... 300. —in compassion... [and] 301. —in meditation...

304. Good people shine from afar, like the snowy mountains; bad people are not seen, like arrows shot by night.

305. He alone who, without ceasing, practises the duty of sitting alone and sleeping alone, he, subduing himself, will rejoice in the destruction of all desires alone, as if living in a forest.



Views of Thailand—[Reclining Buddha], Library of Congress

Chapter XXII: The Downward Course

306. He who says what is not, goes to hell; he also who, having done a thing, says I have not done it. After death both are equal, they are men with evil deeds in the next world.

307. Many men whose shoulders are covered with the yellow gown are ill-conditioned and unrestrained; such evil-doers by their evil deeds go to hell.

308. Better it would be to swallow a heated iron ball, like flaring fire, than that a bad unrestrained fellow should live on the charity of the land...

313. If anything is to be done, let a man do it, let him attack it vigorously! A careless pilgrim only scatters the dust of his passions more widely.

314. An evil deed is better left undone, for a man repents of it afterwards; a good deed is better done, for having done it, one does not repent. . .

318. They who forbid when there is nothing to be forbidden, and forbid not when there is something to be forbidden, such men, embracing false doctrines, enter the evil path.

319. They who know what is forbidden as forbidden, and what is not forbidden as not forbidden, such men, embracing the true doctrine, enter the good path.

Chapter XXIII: The Elephant

320. Silently shall I endure abuse as the elephant in battle endures the arrow sent from the bow: for the world is ill-natured.

321. They lead a tamed elephant to battle, the king mounts a tamed elephant; the tamed is the best among men, he who silently endures abuse.

322. Mules are good, if tamed, and noble *Sindhu* horses, and elephants with large tusks; but he who tames himself is better still. . .

325. If a man becomes fat and a great eater, if he is sleepy and rolls himself about, that fool, like a hog fed on wash, is born again and again.

326. This mind of mine went formerly wandering about as it liked, as it listed, as it pleased; but I shall now hold it in thoroughly, as the rider who holds the hook holds in the furious elephant.

327. Be not thoughtless, watch your thoughts! Draw yourself out of the evil way, like an elephant sunk in mud.

328. If a man find a prudent companion who walks with him, is wise, and lives soberly, he may walk with him, overcoming all dangers, happy, but considerate.

329. If a man find no prudent companion who walks with him, is wise, and lives soberly, let him walk alone, like a king who has left his conquered country behind,—like an elephant in the forest.

330. It is better to live alone, there is no companionship with a fool; let a man walk alone, let him commit no sin, with few wishes, like an elephant in the forest.

331. If an occasion arises, friends are pleasant; enjoyment is pleasant, whatever be the cause; a good work is pleasant in the hour of death; the giving up of all grief is pleasant.

332. Pleasant in the world is the state of a mother, pleasant the state of a father, pleasant the state of a *Samana*, pleasant the state of a *Brahmana*.

333. Pleasant is virtue lasting to old age, pleasant is a faith firmly rooted; pleasant is attainment of intelligence, pleasant is avoiding of sins.

Chapter XXIV: Thirst

334. The thirst of a thoughtless man grows like a creeper; he runs from life to life, like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest.

335. Whomsoever this fierce thirst overcomes, full of poison, in this world, his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass.

336. He who overcomes this fierce thirst, difficult to be conquered in this world, sufferings fall off from him, like water-drops from a lotus leaf...

341. A creature's pleasures are extravagant and luxurious; sunk in lust and looking for pleasure, men undergo (again and again) birth and decay.

342. Men, driven on by thirst, run about like a snared hare; held in fetters and bonds, they undergo pain for a long time, again and again.

343. Men, driven on by thirst, run about like a snared hare; let therefore the mendicant drive out thirst, by striving after passionlessness for himself...



Hong Kong Sampans, (detail) Library of Congress

345. Wise people do not call that a strong fetter which is made of iron, wood, or hemp; far stronger is the care for precious stones and rings, for sons and a wife...

348. Give up what is before, give up what is behind, give up what is in the middle, when thou goest to the other shore of existence; if thy mind is altogether free, thou wilt not again enter into birth and decay.

349. If a man is tossed about by doubts, full of strong passions, and yearning only for what is delightful, his thirst will grow more and more, and he will indeed make his fetters strong.

350. If a man delights in quieting doubts, and, always reflecting, dwells on what is not delightful (the impurity of the body, &c.), he certainly will remove, nay, he will cut the fetter of *Mara*...

352. He who is without thirst and without affection, who understands the words and their interpretation, who knows the order of letters (those which are before and which are after), he has received his last body, he is called the great sage, the great man...

356. The fields are damaged by weeds, mankind is damaged by passion: therefore a gift bestowed on the passionless brings great reward.

357. The fields are damaged by weeds, mankind is damaged by hatred: therefore a gift bestowed on those who do not hate brings great reward.

From the reading...

“When you have understood the destruction of all that was made, you will understand that which was not made.”

358. The fields are damaged by weeds, mankind is damaged by vanity: therefore a gift bestowed on those who are free from vanity brings great reward.

359. The fields are damaged by weeds, mankind is damaged by lust: therefore a gift bestowed on those who are free from lust brings great reward...

Chapter XXV: The *Bhikshu* (Mendicant)

361. In the body restraint is good, good is restraint in speech, in thought restraint is good, good is restraint in all things. A *Bhikshu*, restrained in all things, is freed from all pain...

365. Let him not despise what he has received, nor ever envy others: a mendicant who envies others does not obtain peace of mind.

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366. A *Bhikshu* who, though he receives little, does not despise what he has received, even the gods will praise him, if his life is pure, and if he is not slothful.

367. He who never identifies himself with name and form, and does not grieve over what is no more, he indeed is called a *Bhikshu*.

368. The *Bhikshu* who acts with kindness, who is calm in the doctrine of Buddha, will reach the quiet place (*Nirvana*), cessation of natural desires, and happiness.

369. O *Bhikshu*, empty this boat! if emptied, it will go quickly; having cut off passion and hatred thou wilt go to *Nirvana*.

370. Cut off the five (senses), leave the five, rise above the five. A *Bhikshu*, who has escaped from the five fetters, he is called *Oghatinna*, "saved from the flood." . . .

372. Without knowledge there is no meditation, without meditation there is no knowledge: he who has knowledge and meditation is near unto *Nirvana*.

373. A *Bhikshu* who has entered his empty house, and whose mind is tranquil, feels a more than human delight when he sees the law clearly.

374. As soon as he has considered the origin and destruction of the elements (*khandha*)⁵ of the body, he finds happiness and joy which belong to those who know the immortal (*Nirvana*).

375. And this is the beginning here for a wise *Bhikshu*: watchfulness over the senses, contentedness, restraint under the law; keep noble friends whose life is pure, and who are not slothful.

376. Let him live in charity, let him be perfect in his duties; then in the fulness of delight he will make an end of suffering. . . .

380. For self is the lord of self, self is the refuge of self; therefore curb thyself as the merchant curbs a good horse.

381. The *Bhikshu*, full of delight, who is calm in the doctrine of Buddha will reach the quiet place (*Nirvana*), cessation of natural desires, and happiness.

382. He who, even as a young *Bhikshu*, applies himself to the doctrine of Buddha, brightens up this world, like the moon when free from clouds.

5. *I.e.*, the five kinds of things which make up living things: material forms, feelings, perceptions, mental forms, and consciousness. *Ed.*



Hong Kong Rickshaw, (detail) Library of Congress

Chapter XXVI: The *Brahmana* (Arhat)

383. Stop the stream valiantly, drive away the desires, O *Brahmana*! When you have understood the destruction of all that was made, you will understand that which was not made.

384. If the *Brahmana* has reached the other shore in both laws (in restraint and contemplation), all bonds vanish from him who has obtained knowledge.

385. He for whom there is neither this nor that shore, nor both, him, the fearless and unshackled, I call indeed a *Brahmana*.

386. He who is thoughtful, blameless, settled, dutiful, without passions, and who has attained the highest end, him I call indeed a *Brahmana*.

387. The sun is bright by day, the moon shines by night, the warrior is bright in his armour, the *Brahmana* is bright in his meditation; but Buddha, the Awakened, is bright with splendour day and night.

388. Because a man is rid of evil, therefore he is called *Brahmana*; because he walks quietly, therefore he is called *Samana*; because he has sent away his own impurities, therefore he is called *Pravragita* (*Pabbagita*, a pilgrim)...

391. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who does not offend by body, word, or thought, and is controlled on these three points...

395. The man who wears dirty raiments, who is emaciated and covered with veins, who lives alone in the forest, and meditates, him I call indeed a *Brahmana*...

397. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who has cut all fetters, who never trembles, is independent and unshackled.
398. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who has cut the strap and the thong, the chain with all that pertains to it, who has burst the bar, and is awakened. . . .
400. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who is free from anger, dutiful, virtuous, without appetite, who is subdued, and has received his last body.
401. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who does not cling to pleasures, like water on a lotus leaf, like a mustard seed on the point of a needle.
402. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who, even here, knows the end of his suffering, has put down his burden, and is unshackled.
403. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* whose knowledge is deep, who possesses wisdom, who knows the right way and the wrong, and has attained the highest end.
404. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who keeps aloof both from laymen and from mendicants, who frequents no houses, and has but few desires.
405. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who finds no fault with other beings, whether feeble or strong, and does not kill nor cause slaughter.
406. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with fault-finders, and free from passion among the passionate.
407. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* from whom anger and hatred, pride and envy have dropt like a mustard seed from the point of a needle.
408. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who utters true speech, instructive and free from harshness, so that he offend no one.
409. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who takes nothing in the world that is not given him, be it long or short, small or large, good or bad.
410. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who fosters no desires for this world or for the next, has no inclinations, and is unshackled.
411. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who has no interests, and when he has understood (the truth), does not say How, how? and who has reached the depth of the Immortal.
412. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who in this world is above good and evil, above the bondage of both, free from grief from sin, and from impurity.
413. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who is bright like the moon, pure, serene, undisturbed, and in whom all gaiety is extinct.

414. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who has traversed this miry road, the impassable world and its vanity, who has gone through, and reached the other shore, is thoughtful, guileless, free from doubts, free from attachment, and content.
415. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who in this world, leaving all desires, travels about without a home, and in whom all concupiscence is extinct.
416. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who, leaving all longings, travels about without a home, and in whom all covetousness is extinct.
417. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who, after leaving all bondage to men, has risen above all bondage to the gods, and is free from all and every bondage.
418. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who has left what gives pleasure and what gives pain, who is cold, and free from all germs (of renewed life), the hero who has conquered all the worlds.
419. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who knows the destruction and the return of beings everywhere, who is free from bondage, welfaring (Sugata), and awakened (Buddha).
420. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* whose path the gods do not know, nor spirits (Gandharvas), nor men, whose passions are extinct, and who is an *Arhat* (venerable).
421. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who calls nothing his own, whether it be before, behind, or between, who is poor, and free from the love of the world.
422. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana*, the manly, the noble, the hero, the great sage, the conqueror, the impassible, the accomplished, the awakened.
423. Him I call indeed a *Brahmana* who knows his former abodes, who sees heaven and hell, has reached the end of births, is perfect in knowledge, a sage, and whose perfections are all perfect.

From the reading...

“Give up what is before, give up what is behind, give up what is in the middle, when thou goest to the other shore of existence; if thy mind is altogether free, thou wilt not again enter into birth and decay.”



Entrance to Buddhist Temple, from photograph by F. Boileau

Topics Worth Investigating

1. A verse of the *Dhammapada* states “The evil-doer suffers in this world, and he suffers in the next; he suffers in both. He suffers when he thinks of the evil he has done; he suffers more when going on the evil path.” Yet, it seems evident that some evil-doers do not suffer at all—in fact, some evil-doers seem genuinely happy and fulfilled. In what ways do such persons suffer? How is it that the good person sees “evil days,” and the bad person sees “happiness.” Also, doesn’t it seem odd that if there is no self, there is something that suffers?
2. With regard to pleasure, the *Dhammapada* states “Even in heavenly pleasures he finds no satisfaction, the disciple who is fully awakened delights only in the destruction of all desires.” How do you think the Buddha would respond to the following analysis by Rilke?

Physical pleasure is a sensual experience no different from pure seeing or the pure sensation with which a fine fruit fills the tongue; it is a great unending experience, which is given us, a knowing of the world, the fullness and the glory of all knowing. And not our acceptance of it is bad; the bad thing is that most people misuse and squander this experience and apply it as a stimulant at the tired spots

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of their lives and as distraction instead of a rallying toward exalted moments.⁶

In light of your response consider verse 290 of the *The Dhammapada*: “If by leaving a small pleasure one sees a great pleasure, let a wise man leave the small pleasure, and look to the great.”

3. Does the desire for enlightenment obviate the possibility of enlightenment? The *The Dhammapada* says, “Even in heavenly pleasures he finds no satisfaction, the disciple who is fully awakened delights only in the destruction of all desires.” Explain this apparent paradox.
4. Contrast the role of the various forms of “love” in Chapter 12 (“Govinda”) of Hermann Hesse’s *Siddhartha* with the forms discussed in the *The Dhammapada*.
5. What are the similarities between the chapter “The Elephant” in the *The Dhammapada* and “The Ten Oxherding Pictures” by Kaku-an as discussed by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki?

6. Rainer Maria Rilke. “Letter, July 16, 1903” in *Letters to a Young Poet*. Mineola, N.Y.:Dover, 2002.

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