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Dhammapada

The Buddha¹

Chapter 1: Pairs

1. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all m

ind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox.

2. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.

3. "He abused me, he struck me, he overpowered me, he robbed me." Those who harbor such thoughts do not still their hatred.

4. "He abused me, he struck me, he overpowered me, he robbed me." Those who do not harbor such thoughts still their hatred.

5. Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a law eternal.

6. There are those who do not realize that one day we all must die. But those who do realize this settle their quarrels.

7. Just as a storm throws down a weak tree, so does Mara overpower the man who lives for the pursuit of pleasures, who is uncontrolled in his senses, immoderate in eating, indolent, and dissipated.

8. Just as a storm cannot prevail against a rocky mountain, so Mara can never overpower the man who lives meditating on the impurities, who is controlled in his senses, moderate in eating, and filled with faith and earnest effort.

9. Whoever being depraved, devoid of self-control and truthfulness, should don the monk's yellow robe, he surely is not worthy of the robe.

10. But whoever is purged of depravity, well-established in virtues and filled with self-control and truthfulness, he indeed is worthy of the yellow robe.

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11. Those who mistake the unessential to be essential and the essential to be unessential, dwelling in wrong thoughts, never arrive at the essential.

12. Those who know the essential to be essential and the unessential to be unessential, dwelling in right thoughts, do arrive at the essential.

13. Just as rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, so passion penetrates an undeveloped mind.

14. Just as rain does not break through a well-thatched house, so passion never penetrates a well-developed mind.

15. The evil-doer grieves here and hereafter; he grieves in both the worlds. He laments and is afflicted, recollecting his own impure deeds.

16. The doer of good rejoices here and hereafter; he rejoices in both the worlds. He rejoices and exults, recollecting his own pure deeds.

17. The evil-doer suffers here and hereafter; he suffers in both the worlds. The thought, "Evil have I done," torments him, and he suffers even more when gone to realms of woe.

18. The doer of good delights here and hereafter; he delights in both the worlds. The thought, "Good have I done," delights him, and he delights even more when gone to realms of bliss.

19. Much though he recites the sacred texts, but acts not accordingly, that heedless man is like a cowherd who only counts the cows of others — he does not partake of the blessings of the holy life.

20. Little though he recites the sacred texts, but puts the Teaching into practice, forsaking lust, hatred, and delusion, with true wisdom and emancipated mind, clinging to nothing of this or any other world — he indeed partakes of the blessings of a holy life.

Chapter 2: Heedfulness

21. Heedfulness is the path to the Deathless. Heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful die not. The heedless are as if dead already.

22. Clearly understanding this excellence of heedfulness, the wise exult therein and enjoy the resort of the Noble Ones.

23. The wise ones, ever meditative and steadfastly persevering, alone experience Nibbana, the incomparable freedom from bondage.

24. Ever grows the glory of him who is energetic, mindful and pure in conduct, discerning and self-controlled, righteous and heedful.

25. By effort and heedfulness, discipline and self-mastery, let the wise one make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.

26. The foolish and ignorant indulge in heedlessness, but the wise one keeps his heedfulness as his best treasure.

27. Do not give way to heedlessness. Do not indulge in sensual pleasures. Only the heedful and meditative attain great happiness.

28. Just as one upon the summit of a mountain beholds the groundlings, even so when the wise man casts away heedlessness by heedfulness and ascends the high tower of wisdom, this sorrowless sage beholds the sorrowing and foolish multitude.

29. Heedful among the heedless, wide-awake among the sleepy, the wise man advances like a swift horse leaving behind a weak jade.

30. By Heedfulness did Indra become the overlord of the gods. Heedfulness is ever praised, and heedlessness ever despised.

31. The monk who delights in heedfulness and looks with fear at heedlessness advances like fire, burning all fetters, small and large.

32. The monk who delights in heedfulness and looks with fear at heedlessness will not fall. He is close to Nibbana.

Chapter 3: The Mind

33. Just as a fletcher straightens an arrow shaft, even so the discerning man straightens his mind — so fickle and unsteady, so difficult to guard.

34. As a fish when pulled out of water and cast on land throbs and quivers, even so is this mind agitated. Hence should one abandon the realm of Mara.

35. Wonderful, indeed, it is to subdue the mind, so difficult to subdue, ever swift, and seizing whatever it desires. A tamed mind brings happiness.

36. Let the discerning man guard the mind, so difficult to detect and extremely subtle, seizing whatever it desires. A guarded mind brings happiness.

37. Dwelling in the cave (of the heart), the mind, without form, wanders far and alone. Those who subdue this mind are liberated from the bonds of Mara.

38. Wisdom never becomes perfect in one whose mind is not steadfast, who knows not the Good Teaching and whose faith wavers.

39. There is no fear for an awakened one, whose mind is not sodden (by lust) nor afflicted (by hate), and who has gone beyond both merit and demerit.

40. Realizing that this body is as fragile as a clay pot, and fortifying this mind like a well-fortified city, fight out Mara with the sword of wisdom. Then, guarding the conquest, remain unattached.

41. Ere long, alas! this body will lie upon the earth, unheeded and lifeless, like a useless log.

42. Whatever harm an enemy may do to an enemy, or a hater to a hater, an ill-directed mind inflicts on oneself a greater harm.

43. Neither mother, father, nor any other relative can do one greater good than one's own well-directed mind.

Chapters 4: Flowers

44. Who shall overcome this earth, this realm of Yama and this sphere of men and gods? Who shall bring to perfection the well-taught path of wisdom as an expert garland-maker would his floral design?

45. A striver-on-the path shall overcome this earth, this realm of Yama and this sphere of men and gods. The striver-on-the-path shall bring to perfection the well-taught path of wisdom, as an expert garland-maker would his floral design.

46. Realizing that this body is like froth, penetrating its mirage-like nature, and plucking out Mara's flower-tipped arrows of sensuality, go beyond sight of the King of Death!

47. As a mighty flood sweeps away the sleeping village, so death carries away the person of distracted mind who only plucks the flowers (of pleasure).

48. The Destroyer brings under his sway the person of distracted mind who, insatiate in sense desires, only plucks the flowers (of pleasure).

49. As a bee gathers honey from the flower without injuring its color or fragrance, even so the sage goes on his alms-round in the village.

50. Let none find fault with others; let none see the omissions and commissions of others. But let one see one's own acts, done and undone.

- 51.** Like a beautiful flower full of color but without fragrance, even so, fruitless are the fair words of one who does not practice them.
- 52.** Like a beautiful flower full of color and also fragrant, even so, fruitful are the fair words of one who practices them.
- 53.** As from a great heap of flowers many garlands can be made, even so should many good deeds be done by one born a mortal.
- 54.** Not the sweet smell of flowers, not even the fragrance of sandal, *tagara*, or jasmine blows against the wind. But the fragrance of the virtuous blows against the wind. Truly the virtuous man pervades all directions with the fragrance of his virtue.
- 55.** Of all the fragrances — sandal, *tagara*, blue lotus and jasmine — the fragrance of virtue is the sweetest.
- 56.** Faint is the fragrance of *tagara* and sandal, but excellent is the fragrance of the virtuous, wafting even amongst the gods.
- 57.** Mara never finds the path of the truly virtuous, who abide in heedfulness and are freed by perfect knowledge.
- 58.** Upon a heap of rubbish in the road-side ditch blooms a lotus, fragrant and pleasing.
- 59.** Even so, on the rubbish heap of blinded mortals the disciple of the Supremely Enlightened One shines resplendent in wisdom.

Chapter 5: The Fool

- 60.** Long is the night to the sleepless; long is the league to the weary. Long is worldly existence to fools who know not the Sublime Truth.
- 61.** Should a seeker not find a companion who is better or equal, let him resolutely pursue a solitary course; there is no fellowship with the fool.
- 62.** The fool worries, thinking, "I have sons, I have wealth." Indeed, when he himself is not his own, whence are sons, whence is wealth?
- 63.** A fool who knows his foolishness is wise at least to that extent, but a fool who thinks himself wise is a fool indeed.
- 64.** Though all his life a fool associates with a wise man, he no more comprehends the Truth than a spoon tastes the flavor of the soup.

- 65.** Though only for a moment a discerning person associates with a wise man, quickly he comprehends the Truth, just as the tongue tastes the flavor of the soup.
- 66.** Fools of little wit are enemies unto themselves as they move about doing evil deeds, the fruits of which are bitter.
- 67.** Ill done is that action of doing which one repents later, and the fruit of which one, weeping, reaps with tears.
- 68.** Well done is that action of doing which one repents not later, and the fruit of which one reaps with delight and happiness.
- 69.** So long as an evil deed has not ripened, the fool thinks it as sweet as honey. But when the evil deed ripens, the fool comes to grief.
- 70.** Month after month a fool may eat his food with the tip of a blade of grass, but he still is not worth a sixteenth part of the those who have comprehended the Truth.
- 71.** Truly, an evil deed committed does not immediately bear fruit, like milk that does not turn sour all at once. But smoldering, it follows the fool like fire covered by ashes.
- 72.** To his own ruin the fool gains knowledge, for it cleaves his head and destroys his innate goodness.
- 73.** The fool seeks undeserved reputation, precedence among monks, authority over monasteries, and honor among householders.
- 74.** "Let both laymen and monks think that it was done by me. In every work, great and small, let them follow me" — such is the ambition of the fool; thus his desire and pride increase.
- 75.** One is the quest for worldly gain, and quite another is the path to Nibbana. Clearly understanding this, let not the monk, the disciple of the Buddha, be carried away by worldly acclaim, but develop detachment instead.



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