

# WISE REFLECTIONS

## 1. Invocation

Wherever a wise person makes his dwelling,  
When he provides food for  
the virtuous, the restrained,  
and the leaders of the holy life,  
He should dedicate that offering to  
the devas of that place.  
Receiving honor, they will honor him.  
Being respected, they will show him respect.  
They will also feel sympathy for him,  
like that of a mother for her child.  
For one with whom the devas sympathize,  
things always go auspiciously.  
– *Digha Nikaya 16*



## 2. Daily Reflection

I am of the nature to age. I am subject to aging. I have not got beyond aging.  
I am of the nature to sicken. I am subject to illness. I have not got beyond illness.  
I am of the nature to die. I am subject to death. I have not got beyond death.  
Separation from what is pleasing and beloved will definitely happen to me.  
I am the owner of my kamma, the heir of my kamma; born of my kamma, related to my kamma, and I abide supported by my kamma. Whatever kamma I do, for good or for evil, to that I will fall heir.  
These things should be frequently recollected.

## 3. The Three Characteristics

All that is conditioned is impermanent;  
When with wisdom one sees this,  
One tires of suffering—  
This is the path to purity.

All that is conditioned is suffering;  
When with wisdom one sees this,  
One tires of suffering—  
This is the path to purity.

All phenomena are non-self;  
When with wisdom one sees this,  
One tires of suffering—  
This is the path to purity.



## 4. Generosity

The Buddha said: “If beings knew, as I know, the results of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them with others, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there. Even if it were their last and final morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it.”  
– *Itivuttaka 26*



## 5. The Best Refuge

To sacred hills, woods, and groves,  
To sacred trees and shrines,  
Do people go, gripped by fear.  
But those are not safe refuges,  
They are not the best refuge;  
Not by going there  
Is one freed from all suffering.  
But whoever takes refuge  
In the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha  
Will understand with wisdom  
The Four Noble Truths:  
Suffering, its cause, its overcoming,  
And the Noble Eightfold Path,  
Leading to its overcoming.  
This is a safe refuge;  
It is the best refuge.  
Having taken refuge here,  
One is freed from all suffering.  
– *Dhammapada 188-192*



## 6. An Exhortation

Arise! Sit up!  
Of what use are your dreams?  
How can you who are sick  
And pierced with the arrow of grief  
Continue to sleep?  
Arise! Sit up!  
Train yourself to win peace.  
Let not the king of death,  
Knowing you to be lazy,  
Trick you into his realm.  
Cross over this attachment,  
Tied to which both gods and men are trapped.  
Do not let this chance slip by,  
Because for those who do,  
There is only hell.  
Dusty is indolence.  
Dust comes in its wake.  
With knowledge and vigilance,  
Draw out the arrow of suffering from yourself.  
– *Sutta Nipata 331-334*



## 7. Blessing

May you receive all blessings.  
May the devas protect you.  
Through the power of the Buddha,  
the Dhamma, and the Sangha, may you  
enjoy well-being.



## 8. The Four Dhamma Summaries

The world is swept away. It does not endure.  
The world offers no shelter. There is no one in charge.  
The world has nothing of its own. One has to pass on, leaving everything behind.  
The world is insufficient, insatiable, and a slave to craving.  
– *Majjhima Nikaya 82*



## 9. Abandoning Hatred

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

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

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

– *Dhammapada 3-5*



## 10. Advice to Rahula



Develop the meditation on loving-kindness, for,  
by so doing, hatred will be got rid of.  
Develop the meditation on compassion, for, by  
so doing, cruelty will be got rid of.  
Develop the meditation on sympathetic joy, for,  
by so doing, discontent will be got rid of.

Develop the meditation on equanimity, for, by so doing,  
aversion will be got rid of.

Develop the meditation on the impure, for, by so doing,  
attachment will be got rid of.

Develop the meditation on the perception of impermanence,  
for, by so doing, the conceit “I am” will be got rid of.

– *Majjhima Nikaya 62*

## 11. The Four Divine Abidings

Having compared oneself with others, one  
should practice loving-kindness towards all  
beings by realizing that everyone desires  
happiness.

May I be free from sorrow and always be  
happy. May those who desire my welfare,  
those who are indifferent towards me, and  
those who hate me also be happy.

May all beings who live in this vicinity and those who live in  
other kingdoms in this world-system be happy.

May all beings living in every world-system and each element  
of life within such a system be happy and achieve the  
highest bliss.

Likewise, women, men, the noble and ignoble ones, gods,  
humans, those in woeful states, and those living in the ten  
directions—may all these beings be happy.

May all those who are in pain, in trouble, facing hardship and  
suffering find relief. May their troubles be over. May  
they find happiness.

May all those who are well, successful, healthy, and  
prosperous maintain themselves happily.

All beings are the owners of their kamma, heirs of their  
kamma, born of their kamma, related to their kamma, and  
abide supported by their kamma. Whatever kamma they  
do, for  
good or  
for evil,  
to that they  
will fall  
heir.



## 12. Rebirth

Again and again, they sow the seed.  
Again and again, the sky-king rains.  
Again and again, the farmers plough the fields.  
Again and again, the land produces grain.  
Again and again, the beggars come and beg.  
Again and again, the generous donors give.  
Again and again, when many gifts are given,  
Again and again, the donors reach the heavens.  
Again and again, the dairymen milk the herds.  
Again and again, the calf goes to its mother.  
Again and again, we tire and we toil.  
Again and again, the heedless come to birth.  
Again and again, comes birth, and dying follows.  
Again and again, we are carried to the grave.  
Only by gaining the Path for non-returning,  
Is a person of wisdom not, again and again, reborn.

– *Samyutta Nikaya 7, 12*



## 13. Dependent Arising

Because of ignorance, mental formations arise.  
Because of mental formations, consciousness arises.  
Because of consciousness, name and form arises.  
Because of name and form, the six sense bases arise.  
Because of the six sense bases, contact arises.  
Because of contact, feeling arises.  
Because of feeling, craving arises.  
Because of craving, clinging arises.  
Because of clinging, becoming arises.  
Because of becoming, birth arises.  
Because of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain,  
grief, and despair arise.

With the cessation of ignorance, mental formations cease.  
With the cessation of mental formations, consciousness  
ceases.

With the cessation of consciousness, name and form ceases.  
With the cessation of name and form, the six sense bases  
cease.

With the cessation of the six sense bases, contact ceases.  
With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases.

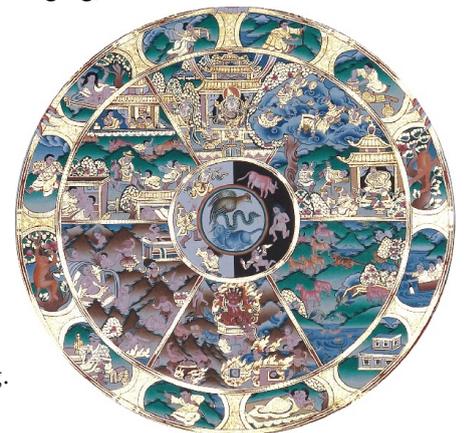
With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases.  
With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases.

With the cessation of clinging,  
becoming ceases.

With the cessation of  
becoming,  
birth ceases.

With the cessation of  
birth,  
aging-and-death,  
sorrow,  
lamentation,  
pain, grief, and  
despair cease.

Thus ends this entire  
mass of suffering.



## 14. The Thirty-two Parts of the Body

This body is made up of:

hair of the head, hair of the body, nails,  
teeth, skin;  
flesh, sinew, bone, marrow, kidneys;  
heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs;  
intestine, mesentery, stomach, excrement,  
brain;  
bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat;  
lymph, tears, serum, saliva, nasal mucous;  
synovial fluid, urine.

Urine, synovial fluid;  
nasal mucous, saliva, serum, tears, lymph;  
sweat, blood, pus, phlegm, bile;  
brain, excrement, stomach, mesentery,  
intestine;  
lungs, spleen, diaphragm, liver, heart;  
kidneys, marrow, bone, sinew, flesh;  
skin, teeth, nails, hair of the body, hair of the head.



Know that here there is nothing pure, lasting, or reliable.  
All is subject to change and to dissolution.

## 15. No Cause for Grief

Uncalled, he hither came,  
Without leave, departed, too;  
Even as he came, he went.  
What cause is there for woe?  
No friend's lament can touch the  
ashes of the dead.  
Why should I grieve?  
He fares the way he had to tread.  
Though I should fast and weep,  
How would it profit me?  
My kith and kin, alas, would more unhappy be!  
No friend's lament can touch the ashes of the dead.  
Why should I grieve?  
He fares the way he had to tread.

– *Uruga-Jataka*



## 16. The Heap of Bones



“The bones of a single person,  
Accumulated in a single eon,  
Would make a heap like a mountain,”  
Said the Great Sage.  
He declared it to be  
As great as Mount Vepulla  
To the north of Vulture Peak  
In the hills of Magadha.

But, when one sees with perfect wisdom  
The Four Noble Truths as they are—  
Suffering, the origin of suffering,  
The overcoming of suffering,  
And the Noble Eightfold Path  
Leading to relief from suffering—  
Having merely run on  
Seven times at most,  
By destroying all fetters,  
One makes an end of suffering.

– *Itivuttaka 24*

## 17. The Mountains

Like gigantic boulders,  
Mountains reaching to the sky,  
Moving in from the four directions  
And crushing all in their path,  
In the same way, aging and death  
Roll over living beings:  
Noble warriors, priests, merchants,  
Workers, outcasts, and scavengers.  
These mountains spare nothing;  
They trample everything.  
Here elephants can hold no ground  
Neither can chariots, infantry,  
A battle of spells, nor wealth win out.  
Thus, a wise person,  
Seeing his own good,  
Establishes firm conviction  
In the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.  
One who practices the Dhamma  
In thought, word, and deed,  
Receives praise here on earth  
And, after death, rejoices in heaven.

– *Samyutta Nikaya 3,25, Pabbatopama Sutta*



## 18. Advisory Stanzas

Viewing indolence as something frightful, as the root of all  
defilements and the destroyer of all good, treat effort, its  
opposite, as the remover of all dangers and be energetic  
at all times—this is the advice of the Buddhas.  
Viewing confrontation as something frightful and treating its  
opposite, non-confrontation, as a haven, seek peace at all  
times—this is the advice of the Buddhas.  
Viewing negligence as something frightful, and diligence, its  
opposite, as a haven, practice the Noble Eightfold Path—  
this is the advice of the Buddhas.

– *Cariyapitaka 3, 15*

## 19. One Person

There is one person whose birth into the world  
is for the welfare of the many, for the  
happiness of the many, for the good, the  
welfare, and the happiness of gods and  
humans, out of compassion for the  
world.

There is one person whose presence is  
hard to encounter in the world, whose  
teaching is seldom heard, and whose  
face is rarely gazed upon.

There is one person whose appearance in  
the world is unique, unequalled,  
incomparable, unparalleled, without  
counterpart, matchless, unrivaled,  
and who lifts up the hearts of gods  
and humans.

The passing of one person from the world  
is regretted by the many and causes  
sorrow. Even though he admonished,  
“After I have passed away, let the  
Dhamma be your teacher,” still his  
passing is regretted.

Who is that person? It is the Tathagata, the Arahata, the fully  
Enlightened Buddha.

– *Anguttara Nikaya 1,13, Ekapuggalavagga*



## 20. Subduing Hatred

When hatred arises, there are five ways by which one can subdue it, and by which he should wipe it out completely.

When hatred arises, one should develop loving-kindness toward the other person.

When hatred arises, one should develop compassion for the other person.

When hatred arises, one should develop equanimity toward the other person.

When hatred arises, one should ignore the other person and not pay any attention to him.

When hatred arises, one should direct one's thoughts to the fact of the other person's being the product of his kamma: "This person is the owner of his kamma, heir of his kamma, born of his kamma, related to his kamma, and abides supported by his kamma. Whatever kamma he does, for good or for evil, to that he will fall heir."

These are five ways by which one can subdue hatred whenever it arises and by which one should wipe it out completely.

– *Anguttara Nikaya 5, 161, Aghatapativinaya Sutta*

## 21. Merit

All beings will die, for life ends in death.

All beings will receive the fruit of their own actions and will be born again accordingly.

Those who have done evil will be born in hell, but those who have done good will be born in a happy destination.

Therefore, one should do what is good, accumulating merit for a future life.

Merit is the foundation for beings in the world beyond.



## 22. A Lump of Foam

Material form is like a lump of foam.

Feeling is like a bubble.

Perception is like a mirage.

Mental formations are like a plantain trunk.

Consciousness is like a magical illusion.

This has been taught by the Kinsman of the Sun.

## 23. No Village Law

No village law is this, no law of a town,  
Nor the law of a single family;  
This is the law of the entire world,  
Inclusive of the devas, that is, impermanence.

No village law is this, no law of a town,  
Nor the law of a single family;  
This is the law of the entire world,  
Inclusive of the devas, that is, suffering.

No village law is this, no law of a town,  
Nor the law of a single family;  
This is the law of the entire world,  
Inclusive of the devas, that is, non-self.



## 24. Meditation on Death

Life in the world is unpredictable and uncertain. Life is difficult, short, and fraught with suffering. Being born, one has to die; this is the nature of the world. With old age there is death; this is the way things are.

As a cowherd drives the cattle to pasture with a stick, so old age and death drive away the life of living beings.

When fruit is ripe, it may drop early in the morning.

In the same way, one who is born may die at any moment.

Just as all pots made by all potters end in being broken, so it is with the life of all who are born



## 25. Understanding Death

Death can be understood by the shortness of the lifespan. Many die at birth or in their youth. Those who live to fifty years, live long. Fewer live to be seventy or eighty. Rare, indeed, are those who live to ninety or one hundred.

Know death by the weakness of the life force. Life needs water and food. Life is dependent upon air.

Understand death by knowing that this body is shared by many others. It is a home to many others.

Understand death by its absence of signs. There is no sign to indicate when death will come—in the morning, in the afternoon, or at night. There is no sign to tell us where one will die—at home or away from home; in the air, on earth, or in the water.

The way death will come is also unknown—from illness, by accident, or by an enemy's hand.

Understand death by knowing that health ends in sickness, that all strength ends in weakness, and that all success ends in failure.

Know that death comes to all. The most powerful ruler, the richest man, the general, the head of a great family, and even the Buddha Himself, must die, so how can I hope to be spared?

As a turning wheel touches the earth at only one point, so, too, should life be understood. The present moment arises, persists, then passes away. Death comes to each moment, and, likewise, to each life, which arises, stays a bit, then passes away.



## 26. Dedication of Merit, Veneration, and Aspiration

May all devas share this merit. Long may they protect the Buddha Sasana for the welfare of the world.

By this merit, never may I live with fools, but have fellowship with the wise until Nibbana is won.

May this merit bring about the extinction of defilements in me.

By this meritorious deed, may I attain Nibbana.

May this merit be passed to my departed relatives! May my relatives be happy!

By this practice, according with Truth, I revere the Buddha.

By this practice, according with Truth, I revere the Dhamma.

By this practice, according with Truth, I revere the Sangha.

By this practice, according with Truth, may I be liberated from the bondage of birth and death.

Well done! Well done!! Well done!!!

