

# Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta

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- questions to answer

- Investigate Buddhist understanding of human nature based on the *Dhammapada*
- Examine the three poisons and their philosophical understanding and remedies in the *Atthakavagga*. Back your ideas up with specific definitions, examples, and quotes. (Maybe you can tie it to Plato's Cave)
- To what extent do later ideas of Mahayana manifest themselves in either/both of these texts?

- responses

1. If one doesn't have perception, they will suffer. If one has enmity, their enmity will not be quelled. If one seeks hedonistic pursuits, one will never reach enlightenment. If one confuses what is essential with what is superficial, then he will never achieve enlightenment. If someone does wrong in life, he will regret his actions and will be tormented in hell. If one just recites religious texts but doesn't put them into practice, he will not achieve enlightenment. If one does not have a strong mind that resists temptation, he will not achieve enlightenment.

2. The first poison is desire, symbolized by a rooster. Desire is a two-edged sword -- it provides happiness when you get what you want for a limited time but if you lose the thing you are seeking you will be devastated. Therefore, it is better to just avoid desire altogether.

The second poison is delusion, symbolized by a pig. Speaking with ignorance causes impermanence in their desires and goals; "They let go of this only to take up that, obediently following their excitement, they do not cross the swampland; they grasp at something, then let it go, like a monkey who lets go a branch only to hold on to the next."

3. Mahayana manifests itself in both of these texts to a lesser extent because the *Dhammapada* is said to be from the word of

the Buddha himself. As Mayahana developed later with less reliance on the exact words of the Buddha, the text contains more Theravada and less Mahayana Buddhist ideas. Additionally, the texts focus on individual enlightenment rather than helping others achieve enlightenment -- also a predominantly Theravada idea.