

Dhammapada

The Path of Truth

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

(Ch. 22) Niraya-Vagga

The Underworld¹ Chapter

(306)

abhūtavādī nirayaṃ upeti, yo cāpi katvā na karomīti cāha.

ubhoṇi te pecca samā bhavanti, nihīnakammā manuṇā parattha.

Liars go to the underworld – as well as those who do something then say they did not do it.

Both are the same after death – people whose destination was determined by bad conduct.

(307)

kāsāvakaṇṭhā bahavo, pāpadhammā asaṇṇatā.

pāpā pāpehi kammehi, nirayaṃ te upapajjare.

Many are those who wear ochre on their neck, but who have harmful traits and are unrestrained;

Because of their harmful actions, they are reborn in the underworld.

(308)

seyyo ayoguḷo bhutto, tatto aggisikhūpamo.

yañce bhuñjeyya dussīlo, raṭṭhapiṇḍamasaṇṇato.

It is better to eat a red-hot iron ball, glowing like fire –

Than for an immoral, unrestrained person to eat the nation's almsfood.

(309)

cattāri ṭhānāni naro pamatto, āpajjati paradārūpasevī.

apuñṇalābhaṃ na nikāmaseyyaṃ, nindaṃ tatīyaṃ nirayaṃ catutthaṃ.

There are four things that a negligent person, an adulterer, encounters:

They accumulate demerit; they sleep poorly; they are criticized; and they go to the underworld.

(310)

apuñṇalābho ca gatī ca pāpikā, bhītaṃ bhītāya ratī ca thokikā.

rājā ca daṇḍaṃ garukaṃ paṇeti, tasmā naro paradāraṃ na seve.

One acquires demerit and a harmful destination –

But only the small pleasure of a frightened man with a frightened woman;

And the king delivers a heavy punishment – therefore one should not engage in adultery.

(311)

kuso yathā duggahito, hatthamevānukantati.

sāmaññaṃ dupparāmaṭṭhaṃ, nirayāyupakaḍḍhati.

Just as a blade that is poorly held cuts one's hand,

A monastic life that is practiced wrongly draws one closer to the underworld.

(312)

yaṃ kiñci sithilaṃ kammaṃ, saṃkiliṭṭhañca yaṃ vataṃ.

saṅkassaraṃ brahmacariyaṃ, na taṃ hoti mahapphalaṃ.

Any questionable² action, any defiled practice,

A suspicious spiritual life – this does not bring great benefit.

¹ Niraya. Lit. "going down" or "going away." Often translated as "hell."

² Sithila. Loose, in the sense of "loose morality" or "compromised morals."

(313)

kayirā ce kayirāthenaṃ, daḷhamenaṃ parakkame.

sithilo hi paribbājo, bhiyyo ākirate rajaṃ.

If one will do what one should do, one should make a solid effort;

As a questionable monastic only scatters more dust.³

(314)

akataṃ dukkaṭaṃ seyyo, pacchā tappati dukkaṭaṃ.

katañca sukataṃ seyyo, yaṃ katvā nānutappati.

It is better to not perform any misconduct; misconduct torments one afterwards.

It is better to perform good deeds; after doing them, one feels no torment.

(315)

nagaraṃ yathā paccantaṃ, guttaṃ santarabāhiraṃ.

evaṃ gopetha attānaṃ, khaṇo vo mā upaccagā.

khaṇātītā hi socanti, nirayamhi samappitā.

As a city on a border is guarded inside and out,

In the same way guard yourself – let not a moment slip past.

When the moment is gone they sorrow, those who wind up in the underworld.

(316)

alajjitāye lajjanti, lajjitāye na lajcare.

micchādiṭṭhisamādānā, sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.

They are ashamed when there is nothing to be ashamed of,

They are shameless when they should not be shameless;

Taking up a flawed perspective, such beings go to a bad destination.

(317)

abhaye bhayadassino, bhaye cābhayadassino.

micchādiṭṭhisamādānā, sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.

They see danger in what is not dangerous, and no danger in what is dangerous;

Taking up a flawed perspective, such beings go to a bad destination.

(318)

avajje vajjamatino, vajje cāvajjadassino.

micchādiṭṭhisamādānā, sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.

They consider to be blameworthy what is blameless, and what is blameless as blameworthy;

Taking up a flawed perspective, such beings go to a bad destination.

(319)

vajjañca vajjato ñatvā, avajjañca avajjato.

sammādiṭṭhisamādānā, sattā gacchanti suggatiṃ.

Knowing blameworthy as blameworthy and blameless as blameless,

Taking up a correct perspective, such beings go to a good destination.

3 That is, generates more impurity.