

A close-up photograph of water ripples, likely on a body of water, with a strong golden glow from a low sun, creating a shimmering, textured effect. The ripples are dark and elongated, contrasting with the bright, golden light reflecting off the water's surface. The overall composition is dynamic and abstract, with the text 'Khuddakapatha' centered over the image.

Khuddakapatha

Khuddakapāṭha

Short Passages

A TRANSLATION

WITH AN INTRODUCTION & NOTES

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

(Geoffrey DeGraff)

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Introduction to the Khuddakapāṭha

This, the first book in the Khuddaka Nikāya (Collection of Short Discourses), appears to have been designed as a primer for novice monks and nuns. In nine short passages it covers the basic topics that one would need to know when beginning Buddhist monastic life; many of the passages also serve as useful introductions to Buddhist practice in general.

Passages 1 and 2 cover the ceremony for taking ordination as a novice. Passage 3 gives preliminary guidance in the contemplation of the body, a meditation exercise designed to overcome pride in one's own bodily appearance, and lust for the bodies of others. Passage 4 introduces many of the basic categories of analysis through which discernment can be developed, beginning with the most basic formulation of the causal principle so central to the Buddha's teaching. By stating that all beings subsist on food, this formulation provides a graphic image for the causal principle, while at the same time indicating that causality is not an innocent or painless process.

Passage 5 gives an overview of the practice as a whole—beginning with the need to associate with wise people, and ending with the attainment of unbinding (*nibbāna/nirvāṇa*). This overview is presented in the context of the concept of protective rituals, and makes the point that—given the nature of human action and its results—the best protection comes not from rituals but from acting in a generous, moral, and wise manner. Passage 6 expands both on Passage 1 and on Passage 5, detailing some of the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, while at the same time elaborating on the practice of meditation and the attainment of stream entry—the point at which the meditator has his/her first glimpse of unbinding. Passage 7 elaborates on the theme of generosity, showing how gifts to the Saṅgha can be dedicated to the welfare of one's dead relatives. Passage 8 presents meritorious action in general as an investment more reliable and longer lasting than material investments. Passage 9 returns to the subject of meditation, focusing on the development of goodwill as a

topic of concentration, in the context of the complete training in virtue, concentration, and discernment.

These nine passages, in different contexts, are frequently chanted in Theravāda countries even today. Lay and ordained Buddhists chant Passage 1 daily, as an affirmation of their refuge in the Triple Gem. Monks will often chant Passages 5–9 as blessings when lay people make merit, and frequently use verses from Passage 5 as sermon themes.

Thus the passages contained in this short book serve as a useful introduction both to early Buddhist training and to modern Theravāda practices.

**Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy
One, the Rightly Self-Awakened One.**

Khp 1. Saraṇagamana — Going for Refuge

I go to the Buddha for refuge.

I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

I go to the Saṅgha for refuge.

A second time I go to the Buddha for refuge.

A second time I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

A second time I go to the Saṅgha for refuge.

A third time I go to the Buddha for refuge.

A third time I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

A third time I go to the Saṅgha for refuge.

Khp 2. Dasa Sikkhāpada — The Ten Training Rules

I undertake the training rule to refrain from taking life.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from stealing.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from sexual intercourse.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from telling lies.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from intoxicating
fermented & distilled beverages that lead to carelessness.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from eating at the wrong
time [after noon & before dawn].

I undertake the training rule to refrain from dancing, singing,
music, & watching shows.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from wearing garlands
and beautifying myself with perfumes & cosmetics.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from high & luxurious
seats & beds.

I undertake the training rule to refrain from accepting gold &
money.

Khp 3. Dvattimsākāra — The 32 Parts

In this body there is:

hair of the head, hair of the body,
nails, teeth, skin,
muscle, tendons,
bones, bone marrow,
spleen, heart, liver,
membranes, kidneys, lungs,
large intestines, small intestines,
gorge, feces,
gall, phlegm, lymph, blood,
sweat, fat, tears, oil,
saliva, mucus, oil in the joints, urine,
brain in the skull.¹

NOTE

1. This item is not usually included in the list of the parts of the body in other parts of the Canon, such as [DN 22](#), [MN 10](#), and [MN 119](#). Its presence here suggests that this passage—and perhaps the whole of *Khp*—was assembled during the time of the Commentaries, which unlike *DN* and *MN*, include the brain in the list.

See also: [DN 22](#); [MN 119](#); [SN 54:9](#); [AN 7:48](#); [AN 4:163](#); [AN 9:15](#); [AN 10:60](#); [Dhp 147–150](#); [Sn 1:11](#); [Sn 5:16](#); [Thag 10:5](#); [Thig 13:1](#); [Thig 14](#)

Khṇ 4. Sāmaṇera Pañhā — The Novice's Questions

What is one?

All beings subsist on nutriment. [There are these four nutriments for the establishing of beings who have taken birth or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical nutriment, gross or refined; contact as the second, intellectual intention the third, and consciousness the fourth.]

What is two?

Name-&-form. [“Feeling, perception, intention, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are called name-&-form.”

{[*SN 12:2*](#)}

What is three?

The three types of feeling [pleasant, painful, neither pleasant nor painful].

What is four?

The four noble truths [stress, the origination of stress, the cessation of stress, the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress].

What is five?

The five aggregates [form, feeling, perception, fabrications, consciousness].

What is six?

The six internal sense media [eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, intellect].

What is seven?

The seven factors for awakening [mindfulness, analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, calm, concentration, equanimity].

What is eight?

The noble eightfold path [right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration].

What is nine?

The nine abodes for beings [“Seven stations of consciousness and two dimensions:

“There are beings with multiplicity of body and multiplicity of perception, such as human beings, some devas, and some beings in the lower realms. This is the first station of consciousness.

“There are beings with multiplicity of body and singularity of perception, such as the devas of the Brahma hosts generated by the first (jhāna). This is the second station of consciousness.

“There are beings with singularity of body and multiplicity of perception, such as the Radiant Devas. This is the third station of consciousness.

“There are beings with singularity of body and singularity of perception, such as the Beautiful Black Devas. This is the fourth station of consciousness.

“There are beings who, with the complete transcending of perceptions of [physical] form, with the disappearance of

perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of multiplicity, [perceiving,] ‘Infinite space,’ arrive at the dimension of the infinitude of space. This is the fifth station of consciousness.

“There are beings who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, [perceiving,] ‘Infinite consciousness,’ arrive at the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. This is the sixth station of consciousness.

“There are beings who, with the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, [perceiving,] ‘There is nothing,’ arrive at the dimension of nothingness. This is the seventh station of consciousness.

“The dimension of non-percipient beings and, second, the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. These are the two dimensions.” {[DN 15](#)}

What is ten?

Endowed with ten qualities, one is called an arahant. [“The right view of one beyond training, the right resolve of one beyond training, the right speech of one beyond training, the right action of one beyond training, the right livelihood of one beyond training, the right effort of one beyond training, the right mindfulness of one beyond training, the right concentration of one beyond training, the right knowledge of one beyond training, the right release of one beyond training.” {[MN 117](#)}]¹

NOTE

1. The Novice’s Questions is one of only two passages in Khp that do not also appear in an identical form elsewhere in the Canon. (The other is [passage 8, The Reserve Fund](#).) However, it is similar to the series of questions presented in AN 10:27–28. For a discussion of the differences among these passages, see *Skill in Questions*, appendix 2.

Khp 5. Maṅgala Sutta — Protection

I have heard that at one time the Blessed One was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Then a certain deva, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta’s Grove, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, she stood to one side. As she was standing there, she addressed him with a verse.

“Many devas & human beings
give thought to protection,
desiring well-being.
Tell, then, the highest protection.”

The Buddha:

“Not consorting with fools,
consorting with the wise,
paying homage to those worthy of homage:
This is the highest protection.

Living in a civilized land,
having made merit in the past,
directing oneself rightly:¹
This is the highest protection.

Broad knowledge, skill,
well-mastered discipline,
well-spoken words:
This is the highest protection.

Support for one’s mother & father,²
assistance to one’s wife and children,
consistency in one’s work:
This is the highest protection.

Generosity, living in rectitude,

assistance to one's relatives,
deeds that are blameless:

This is the highest protection.

Avoiding, abstaining from evil;
refraining from intoxicants,
being heedful of the mental qualities

This is the highest protection.

Respect, humility,
contentment, gratitude,
hearing the Dhamma on timely occasions:

This is the highest protection.

Patience, being easy to instruct,
seeing contemplatives,
discussing the Dhamma on timely occasions:

This is the highest protection.

Austerity, celibacy,
seeing the noble truths,
realizing unbinding:

This is the highest protection.

A mind that, when touched
by the ways of the world,³
is unshaken, sorrowless, dustless, at rest:

This is the highest protection.

When acting in this way,
everywhere undefeated,
people go everywhere in well-being:

This is their highest protection.”

NOTES

1. These are three of the four “wheels” leading to wealth and prosperity. See [AN 4:31](#).

2. See [AN 2:31–32](#).

3. Ways of the world (*lokadhamma*): gain, loss, status, loss of status, praise, criticism, pleasure, pain. See [AN 8:6](#) and [AN 4:192](#).

See also: [SN 3:5](#); [AN 3:110](#); [AN 4:128](#); [AN 10:17](#)

Khp 6. Ratana Sutta — Treasures

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
—on the earth, in the sky—
may you all be happy
& listen intently to what I say.

Thus, spirits, you should all be attentive.
Show goodwill to the human race.
Day & night they bring offerings,
so, being heedful, protect them.

Whatever wealth—here or beyond—
whatever exquisite treasure in the heavens,
does not, for us, equal the Tathāgata.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Buddha.
 By this truth may there be well-being.

The exquisite deathless—ending, dispassion—
discovered by the Sakyan Sage in concentration:
There is nothing to equal that Dhamma.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Dhamma.
 By this truth may there be well-being.

What the excellent Awakened One extolled as pure
and called the concentration
of unmediated knowing:¹

No equal to that concentration can be found.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Dhamma.
 By this truth may there be well-being.

The eight persons—the four pairs—
praised by those at peace:
They, disciples of the One Well-Gone, deserve offerings.
What is given to them bears great fruit.

 This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.

By this truth may there be well-being.

Those who, devoted, firm-minded,
apply themselves to Gotama's message,
on attaining their goal, plunge into the deathless,
freely enjoying the liberation they've gained.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

An Indra pillar,² planted in the earth,
that even the four winds cannot shake:
That, I tell you, is like the person of integrity,
who—having comprehended
the noble truths—sees.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

Those who have seen clearly the noble truths
well-taught by the one deeply discerning—
regardless of what [later] might make them heedless—
will come to no eighth state of becoming.³

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

At the moment of attaining sight,
one abandons three things:
identity-views, uncertainty,
& any attachment to habits & practices.⁴

One is completely released
from the four states of deprivation,⁵
and incapable of committing
the six great wrongs.⁶

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

Whatever bad deed one may do
—in body, speech, or in mind—
one cannot hide it:
an incapability ascribed
to one who has seen the Way.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

Like a forest grove with flowering tops
in the first month of the heat of the summer,
so is the foremost Dhamma he taught,
for the highest benefit, leading to unbinding.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Buddha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

Foremost,
foremost-knowing,
foremost-giving,
foremost-bringing,
unsurpassed, he taught the
foremost Dhamma.

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Buddha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

Ended the old, there is no new taking birth.
Dispassioned their minds toward future becoming,
they,

with no seed,
no desire for growth,
the enlightened, go out like this flame.^z

This, too, is an exquisite treasure in the Saṅgha.
By this truth may there be well-being.

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
—on the earth, in the sky—
let us pay homage to the Buddha,
the Tathāgata worshipped by beings
human & divine.

May there be
well-being.

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
—on the earth, in the sky—
let us pay homage to the Dhamma
the Tathāgata worshipped by beings

human & divine.
May there be
well-being.

Whatever spirits have gathered here,
—on the earth, in the sky—
let us pay homage to the Saṅgha
& the Tathāgata worshipped by devas
& human beings.
May there be
well-being.

NOTES

1. This is apparently equivalent to the liberation of immediacy, mentioned in [Thig 5:8](#), and the concentration that is the fruit of gnosis, mentioned in [AN 9:37](#).
2. Indra-pillar: A tall hardwood pillar, planted at the entrance to a village.
3. The person who has reached this stage in the practice will be reborn at most seven more times. See [AN 3:88](#). On the danger of heedlessness for one who has reached this level of awakening, see [SN 55:40](#).
4. These three qualities are the fetters abandoned when one gains one's first glimpse of unbinding at stream-entry (the moment when one enters the stream to full awakening).
5. Four states of deprivation: rebirth as an animal, a hungry ghost, an angry demon, or a denizen of hell. In the Buddhist cosmology, none of these states is eternal.
6. According to SnA, the six great wrongs are: murdering one's mother, murdering one's father, murdering an arahant (fully awakened individual), wounding a Buddha, causing a schism in the Saṅgha, or choosing anyone other than a Buddha as one's foremost teacher. The first five are listed in [AN 5:129](#) as leading immediately to hell after death.
7. See [Thig 5:10](#).

See also: [AN 4:67](#)

Khṇ 7. Tirokuḍḍa Kaṇḍa — (Hungry Ghosts)

Outside the Walls

This passage is identical with Pv 1:5.

Outside the walls they stand,
 & at crossroads.
At doorposts they stand,
 returning to their old homes.
But when a meal with plentiful food & drink is served,
 no one remembers them:
Such is the kamma of living beings.
So those who feel sympathy for their dead relatives
give timely donations of proper food & drink
 —exquisite, clean—
[thinking:]
 “May this be for our relatives.
 May our relatives be happy!”
And those who have gathered there,
 the assembled shades of the relatives,
with appreciation, give their blessing
for the plentiful food & drink:
 “May our relatives live long
 because of whom we have gained [this gift].
 We have been honored,
 and the donors are not without reward!”
For there [in their realm] there’s
 no farming,
 no herding of cattle,
 no commerce,
 no trading with money.

They live on what is given here,
 hungry ghosts
 whose time here is done.

As water raining on a hill
flows down to the valley,
 even so does what is given here
 benefit the dead.¹

As rivers full of water
fill the ocean full,
even so does what is given here
benefit the dead.

“He gave to me, she acted on my behalf,
 they were my relatives, companions, friends”:
Offerings should be given for the dead
when one reflects thus
on things done in the past.
For

 no weeping,
 no sorrowing
 no other lamentation
 benefits the dead
 whose relatives persist in that way.

But when this offering is given,
well-placed in the Saṅgha,
it works for their long-term benefit
and they profit immediately.

In this way
 the proper duty to relatives has been shown,
 great honor has been done to the dead,
 and monks have been given strength:

 The merit you’ve acquired
 isn’t small.²

NOTES

1. In modern Theravāda merit-making ceremonies, this sentence is the first to be chanted when monks rejoice in the merit of the donors.

2. This passage—beginning with “He gave to me...”—is often chanted when donors are dedicating merit to the recently deceased.

See also: [MN 82](#); [AN 10:166](#)

Khp 8. Nidhi Kaṇḍa — The Reserve Fund

A person stashes a fund away
deep underground, at the water line:
“When a need or duty arises,
this will provide for my needs,
for my release if I’m denounced by the king,
molested by thieves,
in case of debt, famine, or accidents.”
With aims like this
 in the world
a reserve fund is stashed away.

But no matter how well it’s stored,
deep underground, at the water line,
it won’t all always serve one’s need.
The fund gets shifted from its place,
or one’s memory gets confused;
 or—unseen—
 nāgas make off with it,
 spirits steal it,
 or hateful heirs run off with it.

When one’s merit’s ended,
it’s totally destroyed.

But when a man or woman
has laid aside a well-stored fund
of generosity, virtue,
restraint, & self-control,
 with regard to a shrine,
 the Saṅgha,
 a fine individual,
 guests,
 mother, father,

or elder sibling:
That's a well-stored fund.
It can't be wrested away.
It follows you along.
When, having left this world,
for wherever you must go,
you take it with you.
This fund is not held in common with others,
& cannot be stolen by thieves.
So, enlightened, you should make merit,
the fund that will follow you along.
This is the fund
that gives all they want
to beings human, divine.
Whatever devas aspire to,
that is all gained by this.
A fine complexion, fine voice,
a body well-built, well-formed,
lordship, a following:
That is all gained by this.
Earthly kingship, supremacy,
the bliss of an emperor,
kingship over devas in the heavens:
That is all gained by this.
The attainment of the human state,
any delight in heaven,
the attainment of unbinding:
That is all gained by this.
Excellent friends,
appropriate application,¹
mastery of clear knowing & release²:
That is all gained by this.
Acumen,³ emancipations,⁴
the perfection of discipleship:
That is all gained by this.
Private awakening,⁵

Buddhahood:

That is all gained by this.

So powerful this,

the accomplishment of merit.

Thus the wise, the enlightened,

praise the fund of merit

already made.

NOTES

1. Proper practice of the Dhamma.

2. Clear knowing (*vijjā*) = knowledge of previous lives, knowledge of the passing away and arising (rebirth) of beings, knowledge of the ending of the [mental] effluents: sensual passion, becoming, and ignorance. Release (*vimutti*) = release from the cycle of rebirth.

3. Acumen (*paṭisambhidā*) = acumen with regard to the Dhamma, to its meaning, to language, & to quick-wittedness. These four talents are found in some, but not all, arahants.

4. *Vimokkha*. [DN 15](#) describes the eight emancipations as follows:

“Possessed of form, one sees forms. This is the first emancipation.

“Not percipient of form internally, one sees forms externally. This is the second emancipation.

“One is intent only on the beautiful. This is the third emancipation.

“With the complete transcending of perceptions of [physical] form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, and not heeding perceptions of multiplicity, [perceiving,] ‘Infinite space,’ one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of space. This is the fourth emancipation.

“With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, [perceiving,] ‘Infinite consciousness,’ one enters and remains in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness. This is the fifth emancipation.

“With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, [perceiving,] ‘There is nothing,’ one enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth emancipation.

“With the complete transcending of the dimension of nothingness, one enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-

perception. This is the seventh emancipation.

“With the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, one enters and remains in the cessation of perception & feeling. This is the eighth emancipation.

“Now, when a monk attains these eight emancipations in forward order, in reverse order, in forward and reverse order, when he attains them and emerges from them wherever he wants, however he wants, and for as long as he wants, when through the ending of the [mental] effluents he enters & remains in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, directly knowing & realizing them for himself right in the here-&-now, he is said to be a monk released in both ways. And as for another release in both ways, higher or more sublime than this, there is none.”

5. Private Awakening: Awakening as a Private Buddha, one who can gain Awakening without relying on the teachings of others, but who cannot formulate the Dhamma in the way a Full Buddha can.

See also: [SN 1:41](#); [SN 3:19–20](#); [SN 3:25](#); [SN 10:12](#); [SN 47:19](#); [AN 3:52–53](#); [AN 7:6–7](#); [Iti 22](#)

Khp 9. Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta — Goodwill

This is to be done by one skilled in aims
appreciating the state of peace:
Be capable, upright, & straightforward,
easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited,
content & easy to support,
with few duties, living lightly,
with peaceful faculties, astute,
modest, & no greed for supporters.

Do not do the slightest thing
that the observant would later censure.

Think: *Happy, at rest,*
may all beings be happy at heart.
Whatever beings there may be—

weak or strong, without exception,
long, large,
middling, short,
subtle, gross,
seen & unseen,
living near & far away,
born or seeking birth:

May all beings be happy at heart.

Let no one deceive another
or despise anyone anywhere,
or through anger or resistance-perception
wish for another to suffer.

As a mother would risk her life
to protect her child, her only child,
even so should one cultivate the heart limitlessly
with regard to all beings.¹

With goodwill for the entire cosmos,
cultivate the heart limitlessly:
above, below, & all around,
unobstructed, without hostility or hate.

Whether standing, walking,
sitting, or lying down,
as long as one has banished torpor,
one should be determined on this mindfulness.²
This is called a Brahmā abiding
here.

Not taken with views,
but virtuous & consummate in vision,
having subdued greed for sensuality,
one never again
will lie in the womb.

NOTES

1. The image here is sometimes misconstrued as saying that one should protect all beings as a mother would protect her only child. Actually, the parallel is not between the child and all living beings; it is between the child and one's cultivation of the heart: One should protect one's goodwill toward all beings in the same way that a mother would protect her only child. On this point, see [MN 21](#).

2. This line has to be read in line with the Buddha's definition of mindfulness as the ability to keep something in mind. See [SN 48:10](#).

See also: [MN 52](#); [MN 97](#); [MN 135](#); [SN 42:8](#); [SN 46:54](#); [SN 55:7](#); [AN 3:66](#); [AN 4:67](#); [AN 4:96](#); [AN 4:125–126](#); [AN 4:178](#); [AN 4:200](#); [AN 5:20](#); [AN 5:27](#); [AN 6:12–13](#); [AN 8:70](#); [AN 10:176](#); [AN 10:196](#); [AN 11:16](#); [Ud 5:1](#); [Iti 22](#); [Iti 27](#)

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