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# The Voice of the Buddha

The Dhammapada and other key Buddhist teachings

Read by **Kulananda • Anton Lesser • Sean Barrett**

Compiled by **Manjusura**



NA330712D

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|    |                                   |      |
|----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1  | The Dhammapada – The Way of Truth | 6:22 |
| 2  | Pairs                             | 4:58 |
| 3  | Mindfulness                       | 3:15 |
| 4  | The Mind                          | 2:32 |
| 5  | Flowers                           | 3:28 |
| 6  | The Spiritually Immature          | 4:09 |
| 7  | The Spiritually Mature            | 4:00 |
| 8  | The (Supremely) Worthy            | 2:54 |
| 9  | The Thousands                     | 4:15 |
| 10 | Evil                              | 3:42 |
| 11 | Punishment                        | 4:24 |
| 12 | Decay                             | 3:08 |
| 13 | Self                              | 2:54 |
| 14 | The World                         | 3:01 |
| 15 | The Enlightened One               | 4:52 |
| 16 | Happiness                         | 3:06 |
| 17 | Affections                        | 3:31 |
| 18 | Anger                             | 3:34 |
| 19 | Stains                            | 5:10 |
| 20 | The Man of Principle              | 4:09 |
| 21 | The Way                           | 4:29 |

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| 22 | The Miscellaneous             | 5:07  |
| 23 | The Woeful State              | 4:07  |
| 24 | The Elephant                  | 3:59  |
| 25 | Craving                       | 7:41  |
| 26 | The Bhikkhu                   | 6:14  |
| 27 | The Brahmana                  | 10:10 |
| 28 | Angulimala                    | 4:59  |
| 29 | King Ajatasattu of Magadha    | 3:01  |
| 30 | The Arrow                     | 2:33  |
| 31 | The Four Noble Truths         | 3:10  |
| 32 | Thus I have heard/Meghiya     | 10:36 |
| 33 | Bahiya of the Bark Garment    | 3:25  |
| 34 | The Karaniyametta Sutta       | 2:08  |
| 35 | Maha-Mangala Sutta            | 4:06  |
| 36 | The Three Jewels              | 2:49  |
| 37 | Dhamma                        | 0:27  |
| 38 | Samsara (i)                   | 3:08  |
| 39 | Samsara (ii)                  | 2:15  |
| 40 | Tri-Lakkhana                  | 1:19  |
| 41 | The Five Khandas              | 2:45  |
| 42 | The Characteristic of No-Self | 3:54  |

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|    |                               |      |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 43 | Klesas                        | 1:30 |
| 44 | The First Discourse           | 0:27 |
| 45 | The Middle Way                | 0:22 |
| 46 | The Noble Eightfold Path      | 1:04 |
| 47 | The Four Noble Truths         | 2:04 |
| 48 | Death                         | 5:02 |
| 49 | Short Lives                   | 1:07 |
| 50 | Karma                         | 9:10 |
| 51 | Rebirth                       | 2:14 |
| 52 | The result of harmful actions | 2:33 |
| 53 | The Three Trainings (i)       | 4:45 |
| 54 | The Three Trainings (ii)      | 4:39 |
| 55 | The Three Trainings (iii)     | 2:42 |
| 56 | Dependent Origination         | 6:44 |
| 57 | Emptiness                     | 1:47 |
| 58 | Nibbana                       | 4:07 |

**Total time: 3:40:03**

#### **Cast**

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>The Buddha</b>    | <b>Kulananda</b>    |
| <b>Anananda</b>      | <b>Anton Lesser</b> |
| <b>Introductions</b> | <b>Sean Barrett</b> |

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# The Voice of the Buddha

The doctrinal texts of Buddhism are extensive. It has been calculated that they are 50 times larger than The Bible and 250 times larger than the Qur'an. Buddhism is not the religion of a creator deity and therefore its practitioners have legitimately added to the corpus of wisdom as the centuries have passed from the time of the Buddha himself around 500 BC.

So, Buddhist texts are rich and varied, reflecting the changing times and the changing environments in which the teachers found themselves. But there is a special place for what is called the Buddhavacana, the word of the Buddha. His teachings were not written down until some 400 years after his passing away. However, they were maintained by generation after generation of monks who, drawing on memories accustomed to storing accurately vast quantities of words and meanings, relayed them down through the ages.

The Tipitaka, the three baskets, regarded by the Theravadin school (and all subsequent Buddhist traditions) as the earliest records of Buddhism, contains those words purportedly spoken by the Buddha. They were eventually written down in Pali, a language of North-East India; but the Buddha probably spoke Magadhi, because

he spent much of his time in Magadha, a neighbouring kingdom to the Sakyas, his own people.

Even during the Buddha's lifetime there were suggestions that his teachings should be given in Vedic, the aristocratic 'Latin' of India of the period. But the Buddha insisted that his teachings were for everyone and should be given in the language of the people so that everyone could understand what was said.

In the end, this helped the word of the Buddha to survive. As Buddhism spread throughout the East, and was written down, it was translated into many languages. The key texts, the sutras, went into Chinese, Khotanese, Tibetan, Japanese, Mongolian and many others. What is extraordinary is that when the Buddhavacana is compared through the medium of these translations, the accuracy and similarity, despite the distance of thousand of kilometres and centuries of time, is deeply impressive.

This was aided by the use of various mnemonic forms including lists, poetry, chanting and manageable collections. This made it easier for the monks, after the Buddha's Parinirvana, to share out the teachings and commit them to memory.

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For around 400 years the word of the Buddha was passed on. Gradually, however, and certainly by 100 BC, the Buddhavacana was written down. It was written in Pali.

The Dhammapada is one of the best-known and most quoted texts of the Buddhist tradition. There are three extant texts in 'original' language – one in Pali, one in Sanskrit and one in Prakrit. It also appears in Chinese and Tibetan translations, but the texts are largely the same. As Sangharakshita says in his consideration of Buddhist texts:

'Largely as a result of historical accident, the Pali Dhammapada is at present by far the best-known example of this class of canonical texts. Since its appearance in a Latin version in 1850 it has been repeatedly translated into the principal European and Asian languages, the depth and universality of its doctrine, the purity and earnestness of its moral teaching, and the sublimity of its spiritual ideal, combined with the refined simplicity and pellucid poetical beauty of its language, winning for it an honoured place in world literature.' (The Eternal Legacy, Sangharakshita, Tharpa Publications 1985)

While the Dhammapada is the self-contained jewel in this recording, this audiobook presents other teachings which form the basis of Buddhism worldwide, whatever the tradition, whatever the

language, whatever the expression. The stories of Angulimala, Meghiya and Bahiya of the Bark Garment offer not only the nature of the Buddha's view but something vibrant of his character. He, as a man, comes alive here.

Other teachings, on death, karma, rebirth, ethics, meditation and wisdom, can appear more formal; and no one approaching the key concept of Dependent Origination can say it is an easy process to grasp. But here too the unmatched directness of the Buddha comes through so clearly.

For those who want to burrow deep into metaphysics, he produces the metaphor of the arrow; for his own son Rahula, explaining about how actions result in consequences, he draws the image of the mirror. So often there is an unmistakable sense of smile, of compassionate humanity touched with playfulness.

Of course, he can also be unequivocally direct – if you do this, this will happen. But more often than not, there is a gentle understanding of the human condition.

The teaching of the Buddha is among the most wide-ranging and complex of the world religions. It is precisely because there isn't a Bible or a Qur'an, a text from the ultimate, non-human authority, that the Dhamma (the teachings) seems so much

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more discursive. It is a teaching that, as the Buddha says again and again, must be practised to be assimilated – not learnt by rote and accepted.

It is also the nature of Buddhism that its Dhamma literature grew with the centuries, accruing more texts, more teachings, as the spiritual experience of successive generations added to the three baskets of the original teachings. As Buddhism went from country to country, the teachings were expressed in different ways, in different languages; there were different emphases reflecting the different age, a different environment, a different temperament.

This is seen in the variety of Buddha images around the world. A Burmese seated Buddha figure is distinct from a Thai image;

a Chinese image is different from a Japanese image, and a Tibetan rupa is different again. This is also the case now in the West.

Similarly, the language, the metaphors, and the experience of the teachings differ.

And yet it is always enriching to come back to the words of the Buddha himself. This is where it began. This is where the world impetus started, with one man walking around North India in the fifth century BC, encountering bandits, kings, merchants, courtesans and monks in all stages of development. It is when we hear the actual words that we can really come face to face with the Buddha.

**Nicolas Soames**

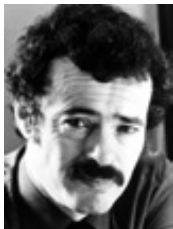


**Kulananda.** A leading member of the Western Buddhist Order, which he joined in 1977, Kulananda is an experienced practitioner of Buddhism and meditation. The author of several books, including “Principles of Buddhism”; “Western Buddhism”; and “Mindfulness and Money”. He is based in Cambridge, where he teaches at the local Buddhist centre.



**Anton Lesser** has worked extensively at the National Theatre and is an Associate Artist of the RSC where he has played over the years many of the principal Shakespearean roles including Troilus, Romeo, Petruchio and Richard III. His many appearances on television include *The Cherry Orchard*, *King Lear*, *The Politician's Wife* and most recently *Invasion Earth* and *Vanity Fair*. For Naxos AudioBooks he also reads *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *The Pied Piper*, *Paradise Lost*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *Hard Times*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Old Testament*, *The Happy Prince*, *Pickwick Papers* and takes the title role in *Hamlet*.





**Sean Barrett** started acting as a boy on BBC children's television in the days before colour when it went out live. He grew up through *Z Cars*, *Armchair Theatre*, *Minder* and *Father Ted*. His theatre credits extend from *Peter Pan* at the old Scala Theatre to the first Ludlow Festival, Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, and appearing with Noel Coward in a West End production of Coward's *Suite in 3 Keys*. Films include *War & Peace*, *Dunkirk* and *A Cry from the Streets*. He was a member of the BBC radio drama company and performs frequently on radio and as a reader of audio books.



**Manjusura** (Ian Tromp) has contributed poetry and prose to a number of journals in the UK and the USA. He lives and works in Birmingham, England within the Western Buddhist Order. Manjusura was born in 1969, and has practised meditation and Buddhism since 1990.

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## Acknowledgments

The Dhammapada: translated by Ven. Sangharakshita, published by Windhorse Publications, Birmingham, UK.

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Excerpted from

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New translation of the Majjhima Nikaya (Teachings of the Buddha Series), translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, published by Wisdom Publications, Boston, USA.

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The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New translation of the Samyutta Nikaya (Teachings of the Buddha Series), translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, published by Wisdom Publications, Boston, USA.

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Produced by Nicolas Soames  
Recorded by Daryl Chapman at RNIB Talking Book Studios,  
London  
Edited by Sarah Butcher

Urgyen Sangharakshita

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CD ISBN:

978-962-634-416-3

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Total time  
3:40:03