SN 1.17 — SN 1:17 Hard to Do | Dukkara Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Hard to Do

Dukkara Sutta (SN 1:17)

For the inexperienced,

the contemplative life is

hard to do,

hard to endure,

for many are the confinements there

in which a fool sinks.

How many days can you follow
the contemplative life
if you don’t block the mind?
Step by step you’d sink
under the sway of your resolves.1

As a tortoise would draw
its limbs
into its shell,
so a monk should—
the thoughts of his heart.
Independent, not mistreating others,
totally unbound,
he shouldn’t disparage
anyone at all.

Note

1. The passion for his resolves is a man’s sensuality,
not the beautiful sensual pleasures
found in the world.
The passion for his resolves is a man’s sensuality.

The beauties remain as they are in the world,
while, in this regard,
the enlightened
subdue their desire. — AN 6:63

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: Dhp 183–185