

#PANCAKE ROCK

Khao Hin Phap Pha

The Pancake Rock of Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand, often referred to as the ‘Pancake Rock,’ which means the mountain of layered stones



Nestled in the southern region of Thailand, Khao Hin Phap Pha, often referred to as the ‘Pancake Rock,’ is one of the country’s most unique and visually striking natural landmarks. Located in the province of Nakhon Si Thammarat, this extraordinary rock formation draws visitors with its surreal appearance and geological significance.

What is Khao Hin Phap Pha?

Khao Hin Phap Pha, which translates to ‘Mountain of Layered Stones,’ is a geological wonder that features flat, round, and pancake-like rock formations stacked on top of each other. These rock layers, often seen in undulating patterns, have been naturally shaped over millions of years through a combination of erosion, weathering, and tectonic processes. The end result is a landscape that looks almost otherworldly, like a giant stack of pancakes spread across the side of a mountain. The rocks are primarily limestone, which is abundant in this region of Thailand, and they have been eroded over time by rain, wind, and other environmental factors, creating the characteristic layers and smooth surfaces.

How Khao Hin Phap Pha Got its Name

The name ‘Pancake Rock’ comes from the unique and visually appealing layers of flat, round stones that resemble stacks of pancakes. As the rock formations are quite distinct, it’s not hard to see how this nickname took hold among locals and travelers alike. The name captures the imagination of visitors, conjuring images of massive, perfectly arranged pancakes scattered across the landscape.

Location and Accessibility

Khao Hin Phap Pha is located in the Khao Luang National

Park, a protected area in Nakhon Si Thammarat province in southern Thailand. The park itself is known for its rich biodiversity, pristine rainforests, waterfalls, and mountain trails, making it a popular spot for nature lovers and outdoor adventurers. To get to Khao Hin Phap Pha, travelers can take a road trip from Nakhon Si Thammarat town. The site is about 30 kilometers from the provincial capital, making it easily accessible for a day trip. However, getting to the base of the mountain often involves a short hike. The trail is well-marked, though it can be moderately challenging in some areas due to the steep incline.

The Geological Significance of the Site

The formation of Khao Hin Phap Pha can be traced back to millions of years ago when the area was once submerged under the sea. Over time, tectonic shifts caused the region to rise, and the limestone rocks that were formed in marine environments became exposed to the elements. The combination of marine sediments and natural forces shaped the area into the distinctive formations we see today.

The layers of rock at Khao Hin Phap Pha are a perfect example of sedimentary rock deposition, where layers of minerals and fossils slowly accumulate over time. The result is a stunning geological landscape that tells the story of the Earth’s natural history. Khao Hin Phap Pha, with its stunning pancake-like rock formations, offers visitors a chance to explore one of Thailand’s hidden geological treasures. It’s an ideal destination for those who love nature, geology, and outdoor adventures. Whether you’re a seasoned hiker or just a curious traveller, the beauty and tranquility of Khao Hin Phap Pha will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on anyone who visits.



Nemo May Vanish!

To a clownfish, anemone bleaching is a catastrophe, their once safe home turns white, exposing them to dangers lurking in the surrounding reef. Under normal conditions, clownfish are camouflaged and protected underneath the swaying, stinging tentacles of an anemone, which are related to jellyfish. The clownfish secrete a mucus that shields them and their eggs from getting stung, so when they attract a predator fish to the anemone, it gets zapped and eaten.



● Jal Khambatta

A new study reveals that heat waves are threatening the future of the fish made famous by *Finding Nemo*.

The Red Sea, circled by desert landscapes, is home to marine life accustomed to the water’s bathtub-like temperatures, often reaching 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer.

But in the past three years, marine heat waves have made the Red Sea even hotter. Rising ocean temperatures, there and around the world, have been devastating for many sea creatures, including an iconic ocean duo: clownfish and anemones.

“This should be a big warning for ourselves as well.”

The new paper from a Boston University-led research team finds that this extreme heat has caused a breakdown in the mutualistic relationship of clownfish, also called anemonefish, and anemones and has resulted in a population collapse in the central Red Sea.

This pair forms one of the most widely recognized mutually beneficial relationships in the ocean, thanks to the hit movie *Finding Nemo*. They’re adapted to work as a team to get nutrients and for protection.

Anemones also have a symbiotic relationship of their own, with a microscopic algae called zooxanthellae, the same algae that pairs

with coral. Just like corals, anemones expel the algae from their tissue during periods of unusually high heat, causing them to bleach.

The researchers found that prolonged bleaching can not only lead to the death of the anemone and the anemonefish, but collapses the entire mutualistic system.

“We always hope that anemones and clownfish groups survive bleaching events, as they have over and over again in the last 10 years, but it hit a point where it was too bad,” says Morgan Bennett-Smith, a PhD candidate in BU’s Marine Evolutionary Ecology Laboratory and lead author of the paper in *npj Biodiversity*. He has studied anemones in the Red Sea for the last decade and has witnessed firsthand how exceedingly high temperatures have pushed the anemones and clownfish past the temperature threshold they can tolerate.

According to Bennett-Smith, the monitored anemones were bleached for about six months during that time. As a result, the paper estimates that 94 to 100% of the clownfish died, and 66 to 94% of the anemones.

“It’s especially painful because the Red Sea is a place many researchers have been hoping and hypothesizing as a thermal refuge,” he says, meaning that organisms there would be protected from the impacts of climate change due to its location and already hot temperatures.

“The fact that even this thermal refugium is collapsing in different ways is especially horrific. It’s not

#ENVIRONMENT



turning out to be the safe haven we thought it was.” To a clownfish, anemone bleaching is a catastrophe, their once safe home turns white, exposing them to dangers lurking in the surrounding reef. Under normal conditions, clownfish are camouflaged and protected underneath the swaying, stinging tentacles of an anemone, which are related to jellyfish. The clownfish secrete a mucus that shields them and their eggs from getting stung, so when they attract a predator fish to the anemone, it gets zapped and eaten.

Human-caused climate change has heated the ocean to new extremes, and has started to unravel the mutualistic relationships that sustain underwater environments, like those between algae and corals, algae and anemones, and anemones and clownfish.

“Historically, anemones have bleached relatively little compared to corals, but now we’re getting up to levels where the anemones are bleaching, and that results in a catastrophic breakdown in the mutualism with the anemonefishes that everybody knows and loves,” says

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The team, in collaboration with colleagues at Harvard University, has also done preliminary testing on the anemones’ stinging cells and found that they don’t fire as well when bleached. In the lab, they’re able to mimic the conditions that lead to bleaching, and study the effects up close. “There’s a lot going on; increased conspicuousness, increased time outside of the anemones, increased conflict between the fish, and reduced protection from the anemones,” Buston says. “These anemonefish become sitting ducks. They’re not great swimmers and don’t stray from their anemones, so they presumably get taken off by predators.”

Peter Buston, an associate professor of biology and one of the senior authors on the paper: “We’re seeing



A Sweet Celebration of Joy and Togetherness

National Cake Day, observed on 26 November, is a light-hearted yet delightful celebration of one of the world’s most beloved desserts. From classic sponges and rich chocolate truffles to regional favourites like fruit-based or cream-filled varieties, cake symbolises celebration, comfort, and shared moments. The day encourages people to bake, share, and indulge, reminding us how food can bring people together across cultures and generations. Whether it marks birthdays, festivals, milestones, or simple joy, cake carries a sense of warmth and nostalgia. National Cake Day is not just about dessert, it’s about happiness served by the slice.



#BHARTRIHARI

Shatakatraya

Exploring the Poetry of Renunciation, Morality, and Love from an Ancient Indian Philosopher-Poet

Among the great masters of classical Sanskrit literature, Bhartrihari holds a unique place. Known for his piercing insight into human psychology, society, and spiritual life, Bhartrihari’s three major collections of Sanskrit verses, the Shatakatraya, have continued to captivate readers for over a thousand years. Composed in elegant and expressive Sanskrit, these verses convey eternal truths about worldly life, ethical conduct, and renunciation.

Who Was Bhartrihari?

Bhartrihari is believed to have lived sometime between the 5th and 7th centuries CE. He is often identified as a philosopher, grammarian, and poet. In addition to his poetic works, Bhartrihari is also credited with an influential treatise on Sanskrit grammar and linguistic philosophy: the *Vakyapada*.

However, it is his poetic work, the Shatakatraya, meaning ‘three centuries’ (each comprising 100 verses), that remains most beloved. The three collections are:

1. Niti Shataka (Century of Ethics)
2. Shringara Shataka (Century of Love)
3. Vairagya Shataka (Century of Renunciation)

Famous Verses

विद्या नाम मरत्य रूपमर्जितं प्रच्छन्नमुपैतम्।

विद्या भोगकरी दया सुखकरी विद्या गुणेषां गुरुः।

Translation

“Knowledge is the greatest beauty of a person; it is a hidden, secret wealth. It brings pleasure, fame, and happiness. Indeed, knowledge is the teacher of teachers.”

This verse shows Bhartrihari’s emphasis on education and character as the true wealth of human beings.

या नः प्रीत्यर्थे विनितं मुनया

या वाचते तन्मया

या नः स्वर्गनिर्घेयया च सुदृढा

या सा ता ममया।

या वाऽऽसन्नित्त्वं विनितं पुनरपि

स्वप्ने दृष्टा तान्मु

ना नः ममयन्मुखाऽस्मिन्

कर्मनिर्घेयसमालोचनम्?

This is a more poetic and emotionally deep verse where the



poet wonders about the mysterious bond between him and his beloved, whose presence lingers in his thoughts, dreams, and memories.

These verses are filled with metaphors and tender expressions of love, expressing the subtle dynamics of human emotions.

नामं मे मतसि स्थितिं न कुर्वते प्रत्यक्षणेन मृद्वी स्नेहस्य लक्ष्मीः स्थितिः।
नं धिक् नं हृदयकल्पनयिनं लोककथारिम्।
साक्षात्कारनिर्घेयया न मनः शोभते परे निर्मये।
(From Vairagya Shataka)

Translation

“My mind no longer clings to the affection of the people who are dear to the world. That mind, once full of love and

attachment, now seeks only the lotus feet of Lord Shiva.” This verse reflects a powerful spiritual transition, turning away from worldly relationships towards divine realization.

Philosophy and Literary Style

Bhartrihari’s verses are celebrated not only for their philosophical depth but also for their literary excellence. Each shloka is carefully crafted in metrical form, with refined diction and clever use of *alankaras* (poetic devices) like simile, metaphor, and pun. He blends personal experience with universal truth, giving his work both emotional intensity and timeless relevance.

Legacy and Influence

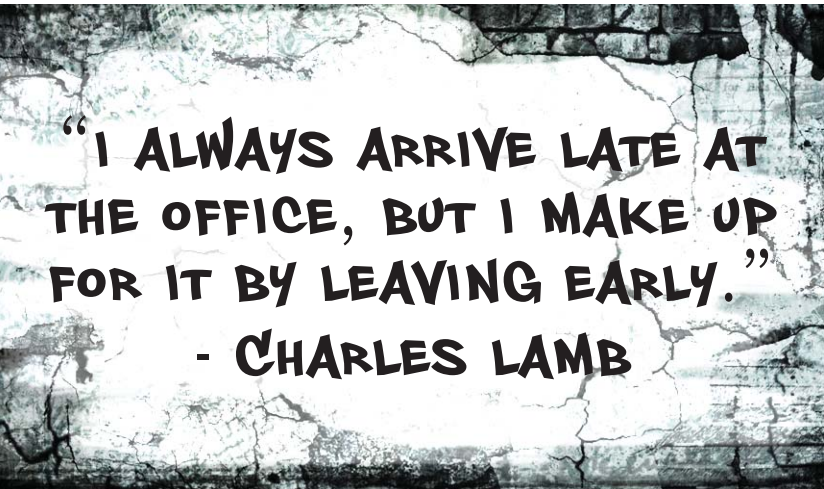
Bhartrihari’s Shatakatraya has influenced countless poets, philosophers, and thinkers across India. His verses are often quoted in moral teachings, classical music, theatre, and spiritual discourses. Even today, his lines are studied in Sanskrit literature curricula and remain a favourite among lovers of wisdom and classical poetry.

Bhartrihari’s Sanskrit verses serve as a mirror to life itself. From love to disillusionment, from worldly wisdom to renunciation, he captures the human condition with poetic elegance and philosophical depth. His Shatakatraya continues to offer guidance, comfort, and insight in a world still searching for balance between desire and detachment, pleasure and peace, action and wisdom.



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

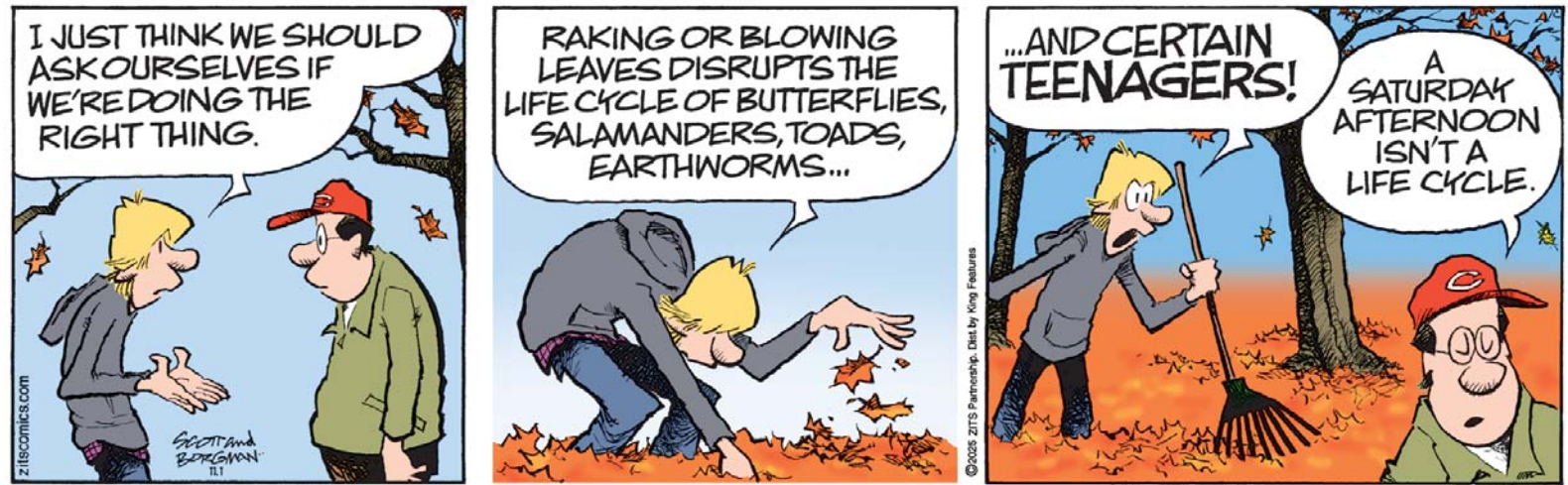
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BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman