



## Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

Ajahn Kumāro Bhikkhu, Resident Monastic  
122 Arlington Street, Unit B, Asheville, NC 28801  
Elisha Buhler's telephone #: (910) 922-1549  
website: mittameditation.com  
email: mittameditation@gmail.com

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### Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (vīrya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The subject of this newsletter is on the Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī). The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter, the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī) is discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter, and the Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter. The next six newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

Wisdom is the understanding of reality as taught in the Noble Four Truths (ariya catusacca). The Noble Truths are statements concerning the nature of existence and the path to liberation from suffering.

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) acknowledges the existence of suffering, the reality of dissatisfaction and unsatisfactoriness in the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra). This truth is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is craving (taṇhā), attachment and identification with that which is impermanent. This truth is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is the elimination of the causes for suffering and the result is nibbāna, the escape from saṃsāra. This truth is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is training in the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga) that leads to nibbāna. This truth is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
48.10 (10) Analysis (2)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of wisdom? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is wise; he possesses wisdom directed to arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering. He understands as it really is: ‘This is suffering.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the origin of suffering.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the cessation of suffering.’ He understands as it really is: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’ This is called the faculty of wisdom.

Wisdom is developed by insight (vipassanā) and is cultivated with observations and investigations of the arising and passing away of the Five Aggregates (pañca khandhā) and the conditional nature of the world.

The Five Aggregates are the components of the personality or ego:

1. material form (rūpa khandha),
2. mental formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
3. perceptions (saññā khandha),
4. feelings (vedanā khandha), and
5. sense consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).

The conditional nature of the world refers to each and every object is composed of parts that are dependent on each other, where the behavior of each part influences the functioning of the whole. The understanding that everything is interconnected in the world is a fundamental principle of wisdom.

The components of the personality and the conditional nature of the world are investigated in accordance to the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) while developing wisdom. The Three Characteristics of Existence are:

1. impermanence (anicca),
2. suffering (dukkha), and the
3. absence of a permanent self (anatta).

See the October 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on the cultivation of insight.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
22.45 (3) Impermanent (1)

At Sāvattī. “Bhikkhus, form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“Feeling is impermanent.... Perception is impermanent.... Volitional formations are impermanent.... Consciousness is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“If, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu’s mind has become dispassionate towards the form element, it is liberated from the taints by nonclinging. If his mind has become dispassionate towards the feeling element ... towards the perception element ... towards the volitional formations element ... towards the consciousness element, it is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“By being liberated, it is steady; by being steady, it is content; by being content, he is not agitated. Being unagitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.’”

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
3.136 (4) Arising

- (1) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All conditioned phenomena are impermanent.’
- (2) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All conditioned phenomena are suffering.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All conditioned phenomena are suffering.’
- (3) “Bhikkhus, whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: ‘All phenomena are non-self.’ A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it thus: ‘All phenomena are non-self.’”

Wisdom is developed with knowledge (ñāṇa):

1. knowledge based on thinking (cintāmayā paññā),
2. knowledge based on learning (sutamayā paññā), and

3. knowledge based on mental development (bhāvanāmayā paññā).

The development of wisdom through knowledge based on thinking (cintāmayā paññā) involves intellectual understanding and contemplation.

- Wisdom that arises through reflective thinking includes contemplation upon the Dhamma, and applying intellectual analysis to understand the Dhamma's meaning and implications.
- Wisdom is closely linked to ethical conduct (sīla). A virtuous and ethical life provides a foundation for the development of wisdom, as a clear, calm, blameless, and guilt-free mind is able to engage in reflective thinking and contemplation.

The development of wisdom through knowledge based on learning (sutamayā paññā) has the following characteristics:

- Wisdom begins with studying, learning and understanding the teachings of the Buddha recorded in the scriptures (tipiṭaka).
- Wisdom is an understanding of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca). Reflecting on these truths the mind develops insight into the nature of existence.
- Contemplation of the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa) is another aspect of developing wisdom. This is the understanding that all phenomena are impermanent, subject to suffering, and devoid of a permanent self, leads to insight into the nature of conditional existence.
- Wisdom is cultivated through an understanding of Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda): the interdependence of phenomena and the origination of suffering (dukkha). This chain of causation explains how suffering arises and ceases, providing insight into the nature of existence. See the July 2023 Newsletter for a discussion of Dependent Origination.

The development of wisdom through knowledge based on mental development (bhāvanāmayā paññā) includes the following:

- Practicing insight meditation (vipassanā) is a condition for developing wisdom. By observing the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, the mind acquires experiential knowledge of impermanence and the other Characteristics of Existence. See the October 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on Insight Meditation.
- Mindfulness meditation is also a condition for developing wisdom. Mindfulness (sati) is cultivated, for example, by practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna): mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mind objects. Through concentration (samādhi) and mindfulness, the mind acquires insight into the nature of these four subjects of contemplation, leading to an understanding of impermanence, suffering, and not-self. See the October 2023 Newsletter for a discussion on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya translated by Maurice O'C Walshe

33 Sangīti Sutta: The Chanting Together

- 1.10  
(42) 'Three kinds of wisdom: of the learner [sekhā], of the non-learner, of the one who is neither (sekho puggalo, asekhō puggalo, n'eva sekho nāsekho puggalo).  
(43) 'Three more kinds of wisdom: based on thought, on learning [hearing], on mental development [meditation] (cintāmayā paññā, sutamayā paññā, bhāvanāmayā paññā).

Note for the above sutta excerpt: The "learner" (sekhā) or "one in training" is a noble disciple (ariya puggala) who has not yet attained arahantship. A 'noble learner' is a disciple in higher training, i.e. one who pursues the three kinds of training (sikkhā):

1. training in higher morality (adhisīla-sikkhā)
2. training in higher mentality (adhicitta-sikkhā)
3. training in higher wisdom (adhipaññā-sikkhā)

The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa

CHAPTER XIV THE AGGREGATES (Khandha-niddesa)

[A. UNDERSTANDING]

14. 7. ... understanding acquired without hearing from another is that consisting in what is reasoned because it is produced by one's own reasoning. Understanding acquired by hearing from another is that consisting in what is heard,

because it is produced by hearing. Understanding that has reached absorption, having been somehow produced by (meditative) development, is that consisting in development.

Wisdom and faith balance each other in the Five Powers (pañca-balāni):

1. the power of faith (saddhā) is unshakeable by faithlessness (unbelief),
2. the power of energy (virīya) is unshakeable by laziness,
3. the power of mindfulness (sati) is unshakeable by forgetfulness,
4. the power of concentration (samādhi) is unshakeable by distractedness, and
5. the power of wisdom (paññā) is unshakeable by ignorance (avijjā).

The balance between faith and wisdom is required in order to efficiently train the mind. Faith is the initial inspiration and driving force to practice the Noble Eightfold Path. However, blind faith acts to bypass the investigative quality of wisdom, and it is wisdom that provides the discernment and insight necessary for training the mind, and wisdom is what uproots the defilements.

Faith without wisdom may lead to superstition or dogmatism, while wisdom without faith may result in a lack of inspiration and motivation to train the mind. The harmonious interplay of faith and wisdom is necessary for the cultivation of a balanced mind that trains for purification of defilements.

The statement that the power of wisdom is unshakeable by ignorance emphasizes the transformative and liberating nature of wisdom. Once a mind attains wisdom through insight meditation and understanding, the mind will then uproot ignorance that conditions the cycle of suffering (saṃsāra). The stable and unshakeable power of wisdom is not swayed or undermined by delusion.

Wisdom (paññā) is balanced by concentration (samādhi) because the development of a focused mind is necessary for the arising of insights and understanding. Concentration sharpens the mind for introspection, while wisdom provides insights gained through focused awareness.

The Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections.

- The Perfection of Generosity (dāna pāramī) helps support the cultivation of wisdom by creating favorable conditions for learning and practice. Through acts of generosity, the mind creates wholesome kammic conditions that will contribute to a conducive environment for the development of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Morality (sīla pāramī) promotes wholesome behavior that is essential for a stable and concentrated mind. By observing ethical principles, the mind creates a foundation for concentration and mental clarity, which are required for the cultivation of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) reduces the distractions and obstacles that hinder the development of wisdom. Letting go of worldly desires allows for the concentrated mind to understand the nature of reality.
- The Perfection of Wisdom requires diligent effort in studying, contemplating, and meditating on the Dhamma. The Perfection of Energy (virīya pāramī) supports the sustained concentration needed for the cultivation of wisdom, the commitment for continuous practice, and overcoming obstacles on the path.
- Wisdom requires patience and perseverance. The Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī) allows the mind to navigate challenges and setbacks without becoming discouraged and allows for a calm and composed mind that is able to understand the Dhamma.
- The Perfection of Truthfulness (sacca pāramī) is fundamental and required in the pursuit of wisdom. Understanding the truth of existence and reality is an aspect of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) supports the unwavering commitment to the cultivation of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī) creates a wholesome and compassionate state of mind. Cultivating a heart with love and compassion contributes to a wholesome and balanced approach to the pursuit of wisdom.
- The Perfection of Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) maintains a balanced mind in the face of both pleasant and unpleasant feelings and perceptions, and prevents attachment or aversion to

impermanent phenomena. Equanimity allows the mind to have an impartial and objective observation of the contents of experience which results in clear and objective wisdom.

Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasizes wisdom (paññā) and compassion (karunā) as the two pillars of practice. Theravāda Buddhism recognizes the importance of cultivating both wisdom and compassion in order to realize nibbāna. The virtue of wisdom understands the nature of reality and the virtue of compassion works to alleviate the suffering of others.

The following sutta excerpts provide additional advise for the cultivation of wisdom.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
135 Cūḷakammavibhanga Sutta: The Shorter Exposition of Action

17. “Here, student, some man or woman does not visit a recluse or a brahmin and ask: ‘Venerable sir, what is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What is blameable? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my harm and suffering for a long time? What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?’ Because of performing and undertaking such action... he reappears in a state of deprivation... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is stupid. This is the way, student, that leads to stupidity, namely, one does not visit a recluse or brahmin and ask such questions.

18. “But here, student, some man or woman visits a recluse or a brahmin and asks: ‘Venerable sir, what is wholesome?... What kind of action will lead to my welfare and happiness for a long time?’ Because of performing and undertaking such action... he reappears in a happy destination... But if instead he comes back to the human state, then wherever he is reborn he is wise. This is the way, student, that leads to **wisdom**, namely, one visits a recluse or brahmin and asks such questions.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
4.115 (5) Deeds

“Bhikkhus, there are these four cases of deeds. What four? (1) There is a deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove harmful. (2) There is a deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove beneficial. (3) There is a deed that is agreeable to do which will prove harmful. (4) There is a deed that is agreeable to do which will prove beneficial.

(1) “Bhikkhus, take first the case of the deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove harmful. One considers that this deed should not be done on both grounds: because it is disagreeable to do and because it will prove harmful. One considers that this deed should not be done on both grounds.

(2) “Next, take the case of the deed that is disagreeable to do which will prove beneficial. It is in this case that one can understand who is a fool and who is a **wise** person in regard to manly strength, manly energy, and manly exertion. The fool does not reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is disagreeable to do, still it will prove beneficial.’ So he does not do that deed, and his refraining from it proves harmful. But the **wise** person does reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is disagreeable to do, still it will prove beneficial.’ So he does that deed, and it proves beneficial.

(3) “Next, take the case of the deed that is agreeable to do which will prove harmful. It is in this case, too, that one can understand who is a fool and who is a **wise** person in regard to manly strength, manly energy, and manly exertion. The fool does not reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is agreeable to do, still it will prove harmful.’ So he does that deed, and it proves harmful. But the **wise** person does reflect thus: ‘Although this deed is agreeable to do, still it will prove harmful.’ So he does not do that deed, and his refraining from it proves beneficial.

(4) “Next, take the case of the deed that is agreeable to do which will prove beneficial. This deed is considered one that should be done on both grounds: because it is agreeable to do and because it proves beneficial. This deed is considered one that should be done on both grounds. “These, bhikkhus, are the four cases of deeds.”

## Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media and we ask that you please sign-up for every event that you are planing to attend at [www.MeetUp.com](http://www.MeetUp.com). Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps).

## Activities of the Meditation Center

- Sitting meditation is held everyday at 6:30AM and 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) on the days and time you would like to participate.

- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30PM and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com) if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15PM the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a Library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00PM and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.
- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information please send an email to [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com). We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

## **Request for Support**

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website [www.mittameditation.com](http://www.mittameditation.com).
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website [www.mittameditation.com](http://www.mittameditation.com) and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.