



## 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](http://mittameditation.com)  
email: [mittameditation@gmail.com](mailto:mittameditation@gmail.com)

## May 2025 Newsletter



### Dhamma

The word Dhamma is derived from the root dham, which comes from the pāli verb dhamati; meaning "to uphold," "to support," "to sustain," or "to hold". Dhamma refers to that which upholds or sustains the order of the universe or the proper way of living according to moral laws. Dhamma generally refers to the teachings of the Buddha or the natural law governing the universe and individual conduct

#### Wikipedia

##### Dharma

The word dharma has roots in the Sanskrit dhr-, which means to hold or to support, and is related to Latin firmus (firm, stable). From this, it takes the meaning of "what is established or firm", and hence "law". It is derived from an older Vedic Sanskrit n-stem dharman-, with a literal meaning of "bearer, supporter", in a religious sense conceived as an aspect of Rta.

In the Vedic religion, Rta (Sanskrit ṛta "order, rhythm, rule; truth; logos") is the principle of natural order which regulates and coordinates the operation of the universe and everything within it.

Dhamma has multiple layers of meaning.

- Dhamma is the universal law or truth; the natural order of things, the underlying principles or laws that govern the universe; as well as the moral order that governs human conduct.
- Dhamma is the teachings of the Buddha, that include ethical conduct (sīla), mental development (bhāvanā), and wisdom (paññā); and guides disciples on the path to liberation (nibbāna). Mental development is achieved through training in morality, meditation and contemplation practices
- Dhamma is nature, describing conditioned reality in terms of the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa): impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and not-self (anattā); and the unconditioned reality, nibbāna.
- Dhamma is also the pāli scriptures, the Three Baskets (tipiṭaka), which contain the teachings of the Buddha:
  1. Basket of Discipline (Vinaya Piṭaka),
  2. Basket of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka), and
  3. Basket of Higher Doctrine (Abhidhamma Piṭaka).

Dhamma are the teachings, principles, practices, and truths that train the mind to be liberated from suffering (dukkha) through the eradication of defilements (kilesa), and by realizing wisdom and compassion (karuṇā).

Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines by Nyanatiloka Thera  
p. 102

dhamma: lit. the 'bearer', constitution (or nature of a thing), norm, law, doctrine; justice, righteousness; quality; thing, object of mind 'phenomenon'. In all these meanings the word dhamma is to be met with in the texts. The Commentary to DN instances four applications of this term: guṇa (quality, virtue), desanā (instruction), pariyatti (text), nijjivatā (soullessness, e.g. "all dhammā, phenomena, are impersonal," etc.). The Commentary to Dhs has hetu (condition) instead of desanā. Thus, the analytical knowledge of the law is explained in Vism XIV and in Vibh as hetumhi-ñāṇa, knowledge of the conditions.

The Dhamma, as the liberating law discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha, is summed up in the Four Noble Truths. It forms one of the Three Gems (ti-ratana, q.v.) and one of the ten recollections.

Dhamma, as object of mind (dhammāyatana) may be anything past, present or future, corporeal or mental, conditioned or not, real or imaginary.

The following are the Ten Qualities of the Dhamma (dasa dhamma guṇa).

1. Well-expounded (svākkhāto)

The Dhamma is taught clearly and systematically by the Buddha; encompasses the teachings on ethics, mental development, and wisdom; is easy to understand, logical, and complete. The Buddha's teachings are profound yet accessible to those who earnestly seek understanding.

The path to liberation (nibbāna) is discernible and can be comprehended through diligent practice and study of the Dhamma.

2. Directly visible (sanditṭhiko)

The truth of the Dhamma can be seen and experienced in this life, realized directly through practice and insight; rather than being something that must be taken on faith alone. For example, practicing generosity (dāna), morality, and meditation results in tangible benefits, such as peace and clarity of mind. Furthermore, the practice of insight (vipassanā) meditation reveals the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self nature of existence, resulting in an understanding of conditioned reality. Liberation from suffering is an attainable goal, realized through diligent practice and direct experience.

3. Timeless (akāliko)

The Dhamma is beyond time, not bound by time; its benefits can be realized here and now. The timeless nature of the Dhamma means that its principles; such as the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self of all conditioned things; are universal. Whether in the past, present, or future, the mind that trains in morality, concentration, and wisdom will experience the benefits immediately: an increasing sense of peace that results in liberation. Understanding and practicing the Dhamma is ever-relevant which results in transformation in the present.

4. Inviting of investigation (ehi-passiko)

The Buddha encouraged examination, verification and direct experience of the Dhamma rather than blind faith. The Dhamma invites individuals to come, see, and test its truth for themselves.

The Buddha taught the Dhamma through reason and experience. The Buddha encouraged his followers, including the Kālāmas in the Kālāma Sutta (listed below as Kesaputtiya), not to accept teachings based on tradition, lineage, authority, or speculation, but to examine the teachings critically and adopt what is beneficial based on personal experience.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

p. 279-287

The Book of Threes 3.65 (5) Kesaputtiya<sup>455</sup>

On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering on tour among the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of monks when he reached the town of the Kālāmas named Kesaputta. The Kālāmas of Kesaputta heard: "It is said that the ascetic Gotama, the son of the Sakyans who went forth from a Sakyan family, has arrived at Kesaputta. Now a good report about that Master Gotama has circulated thus: 'That Blessed One is an arahant, perfectly enlightened ... [and] reveals a spiritual life that is perfectly complete and pure.' Now it is good to see such arahants."

Then the Kālāmas of Kesaputta approached the Blessed One. Some paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down to one side ... some kept silent and sat down to one side. Sitting to one side, the Kālāmas said to the Blessed One:

"Bhante, there are some ascetics and brahmins who come to Kesaputta. They explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, denigrate, deride, and denounce the doctrines of others. But then some other ascetics and brahmins come to Kesaputta, and they too explain and elucidate their own doctrines, but disparage, denigrate, deride, and denounce the doctrines of others. We are perplexed and in doubt, Bhante, as to which of these good ascetics speak truth and which speak falsehood."

"It is fitting for you to be perplexed, Kālāmas, fitting for you to be in doubt. Doubt has arisen in you about a perplexing matter. Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence [of a speaker], or because you think: 'The ascetic is our guru.'<sup>457</sup> But when, Kālāmas, you know for yourselves: 'These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to harm and suffering,' then you should abandon them.

(1) "What do you think, Kālāmas? When greed arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?"<sup>458</sup>

"For his harm, Bhante."

"Kālāmas, a greedy person, overcome by greed, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life, takes what is not given, transgresses with another's wife, and speaks falsehood; and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?"

"Yes, Bhante."

(2) "What do you think, Kālāmas? When hatred arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?"

"For his harm, Bhante."

"Kālāmas, a person who is full of hate, overcome by hatred, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life ... and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?"

"Yes, Bhante."

(3) "What do you think, Kālāmas? When delusion arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?"

"For his harm, Bhante."

"Kālāmas, a person who is deluded, overcome by delusion, with mind obsessed by it, destroys life ... and he encourages others to do likewise. Will that lead to his harm and suffering for a long time?"

"Yes, Bhante."

"What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?" – "Unwholesome, Bhante." – "Blameworthy or blameless?" – "Blameworthy, Bhante." – "Censured or praised by the wise?" – "Censured by the wise, Bhante." – "Accepted and undertaken, do they lead to harm and suffering or not, or how do you take it?" – "Accepted and undertaken, these things lead to harm and suffering. So we take it."

"Thus, Kālāmas, when we said: 'Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition ... But when you know for yourselves: 'These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practiced, lead to harm and suffering,' then you should abandon them,' it is because of this that this was said.

"Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reasoned cogitation, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence [of a speaker], or because you think: 'The ascetic is our guru.' But when you know for yourselves: 'These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and happiness,' then you should live in accordance with them.

(1) "What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-greed arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?"

"For his welfare, Bhante."

"Kālāmas, a person without greed, not overcome by greed, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life, take what is not given, transgress with another's wife, or speak falsehood; nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?"

"Yes, Bhante."

(2) "What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-hatred arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?"

"For his welfare, Bhante."

"Kālāmas, a person who is without hate, not overcome by hatred, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life ... nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?"

"Yes, Bhante."

(3) "What do you think, Kālāmas? When non-delusion arises in a person, is it for his welfare or for his harm?"

"For his welfare, Bhante."

"Kālāmas, a person who is undeluded, not overcome by delusion, his mind not obsessed by it, does not destroy life ... nor does he encourage others to do likewise. Will that lead to his welfare and happiness for a long time?"

"Yes, Bhante."

"What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things wholesome or unwholesome?" – "Wholesome, Bhante." – "Blameworthy or blameless?" – "Blameless, Bhante." – "Censured or praised by the wise?" – "Praised by the wise, Bhante." – "Accepted and undertaken, do they lead to welfare and happiness or not, or how do you take it?" – "Accepted and undertaken, these things lead to welfare and happiness. So we take it."

"Thus, Kālāmas, when we said: 'Come, Kālāmas, do not go by oral tradition ... But when you know for yourselves: 'These things are wholesome; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to welfare and happiness,' then you should live in accordance with them,' it is because of this that this was said.

"Then, Kālāmas, that noble disciple, who is thus devoid of longing, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful, dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness ... with a mind imbued with compassion ... with a mind imbued with altruistic joy ... with a mind imbued with equanimity, likewise the second quarter, the third quarter, and the fourth quarter. Thus above, below, across, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire world with a mind imbued with equanimity, vast, exalted, measureless, without enmity, without ill will.

"This noble disciple, Kālāmas, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won four assurances in this very life.

"The first assurance he has won is this: 'If there is another world, and if there is the fruit and result of good and bad deeds, it is possible that with the breakup of the body, after death, I will be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.'

"The second assurance he has won is this: 'If there is no other world, and there is no fruit and result of good and bad deeds, still right here, in this very life, I maintain myself in happiness, without enmity and ill will, free of trouble.

"The third assurance he has won is this: 'Suppose evil comes to one who does evil. Then, when I have no evil intentions toward anyone, how can suffering afflict me, since I do no evil deed?'"

"The fourth assurance he has won is this: 'Suppose evil does not come to one who does evil. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.'"

"This noble disciple, Kālāmas, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won these four assurances in this very life."<sup>461</sup>

"So it is, Blessed One! So it is, Fortunate One! This noble disciple whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won four assurances in this very life."

"The first assurance he has won ... [as above, down to:] ... The fourth assurance he has won is this: 'Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then right here I see myself purified in both respects.'"

"This noble disciple, Bhante, whose mind is in this way without enmity, without ill will, undefiled, and pure, has won these four assurances in this very life."

"Excellent, Bhante! ... We go for refuge to the Blessed One, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of bhikkhus. Let the Blessed One consider us lay followers who from today have gone for refuge for life."

Notes:

455 This discourse is best known under the name "The Kālāma Sutta."

457 These ten inadequate sources of knowledge may be divided into three categories:

- (1) The first, comprising the first four criteria, are propositions based on tradition. These include "oral tradition" (anussava), generally understood to refer to the Vedic tradition; "lineage" (paramparā), an unbroken succession of teachings or teachers; "hearsay" (or "report"; itikirā), popular opinion or general consensus; and "a collection of scriptures" (piṭakasampadā), a collection of texts regarded as infallible.
- (2) In the Buddha's day these would have been orally transmitted rather than written.
- (3) The second set comprises the next four terms referring to four types of reasoning; their differences need not detain us here, but since the Buddha himself often uses reasoning, they must all involve reasoning from hypothetical premises rather than from empirical observation.
- (4) The third set, consisting of the last two items, contains two types of personal authority: the first, "seeming competence" (bhabbarūpatā), is the personal charisma of the speaker (perhaps including his external qualifications); the second is the authority of the speaker as one's guru (Pāli garu being identical with Skt guru).

458 According to the Buddha, greed, hatred, and delusion are the three unwholesome roots (akusalamūlāni), which underlie all immoral conduct and all defiled states of mind. Since the goal of his own teaching, nibbāna, is the destruction of greed, hatred, and delusion, the Buddha subtly leads the Kālāmas to affirm his teaching simply by reflecting on their own experience, without any need for him to impose his authority on them.

461 The four assurances of MĀ 16 are as follows:

- (1) "If there is this world and the other world, if there are results of good and bad deeds, I acquire the kamma connected with this right view; I uphold it and possess it. With the breakup of the body, after death, I will certainly go to a good state, even to rebirth in the heavenly realm."
- (2) "If this world and the other world do not exist, and there are no results of good and bad deeds, still, even in this present life, I cannot be blamed by others on account of [my conduct], but I will be praised by the wise. However, those of right effort and right view say that there is [this world, the other world, and results of karma]."
- (3) "If anything is done, certainly I do no evil, I think nothing evil. Since I do no evil, how can suffering arise for me?"
- (4) "If anything is done, certainly I do no evil. I do not transgress against what is fearful and not fearful in the world. I always have love and compassion for the whole world. My mind has no belligerence toward sentient beings; it is without stains, joyful and happy."

The Inviting of Investigation is evident during contemplating the nature of conditioned reality as having the characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self; there is no reliance on external validation, these truths are seen directly. Living and practicing the truths of Dhamma is a path of personal verification, where its effectiveness is proven through direct experience rather than theoretical debate.

## 5. Leading inward (opānāyiko)

The Dhamma leads one towards liberation from suffering and nibbāna. Rather than being focused on external rituals or worldly achievements, the teachings of the Buddha direct the mind's attention inward, toward examination of the contents of experience, intuitive wisdom, and the direct experience of truth.

The Dhamma that leads inward is produced by developing mental qualities such as moral integrity, concentration, and wisdom. By turning inward, the mind moves away from worldly distractions and toward the cessation of suffering, nibbāna.



The inward journey is personal and experiential; no one else can walk the path for another. The Dhamma serves as a guide, but realization comes from the mind's own effort and insight.

6. To be realized individually by the wise (paccattaṃ veditaṃ viññūhi)

The truth of the Dhamma is experienced by those with wisdom, and cannot be understood through external authority, mere belief, or intellectual study alone. Instead, it must be experienced through the practice of living the Dhamma.

The Dhamma is not something that can be transferred from one person to another like ordinary knowledge; it requires inner realization. Just as no one can taste food for another, the experience of the path; such as the peace of a concentrated mind must be known firsthand. The cultivation of morality, concentration, and wisdom will directly verify the truth of the Dhamma.

7. Leading out of suffering (nīyyāniko)

The Dhamma provides a path that leads the mind out of suffering and the cycle of birth, death and rebirth (saṃsāra). Realizing the Four Noble Truths: suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation; and the Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration; are the means that liberates the mind from suffering and realize nibbāna.

8. Illuminating like a lamp (dīpajalīkato)

The Dhamma dispels the darkness of ignorance and reveals the truth of conditioned and unconditioned reality. Just as a lamp provides light to help see clearly, the Dhamma illuminates the path that develops wisdom, freeing the mind from defilements, delusions, misperceptions and wrong views. The Buddha's teachings shine light on the fundamental truths, allowing the mind to see things as they really are (yathābhūtañāḍassana). Through the practice of morality, concentration, and wisdom, the mind replaces confusion with understanding and suffering with peace.

The Dhamma is a guiding light that leads beings out of the darkness of the cycle of rebirths and toward nibbāna. The Dhamma is accessible to all who earnestly seek the truth, just as a lamp benefits anyone who wishes to see.

9. Ending in liberation (vimokkhapariyosāno)

The goal of the Buddha's teachings is complete freedom and liberation from suffering, nibbāna. The Dhamma provides a clear and structured path, beginning with moral conduct, progressing through concentration, and culminating in wisdom. This gradual training leads to the eradication of defilements: greed, hatred, and delusion; which are the root causes of suffering.

Unlike worldly paths that may offer temporary happiness, the final goal of the teachings is permanent liberation from the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Through realization of the Four Noble Truths and the Three Characteristics of Existence, the mind realizes the unshakable freedom (vimutti).

10. Purifying (suddhiko)

The Dhamma purifies the mind from defilements, the practice purifies thoughts, speech, and actions, resulting in peace and nibbāna.

The process of purification occurs through the Threefold Training (sikkhā):

1. Ethical conduct purifies actions and speech, creating a foundation for mental purification and clarity.
2. Concentration calms and stabilizes the mind, freeing it from distractions.
3. Wisdom eradicates ignorance and the destruction of defilements, which results in liberation from suffering, nibbāna.

The Dhamma acts like a cleansing stream that washes away impurities, guiding toward a mind that is pure, luminous, and free from suffering.

The Dhamma forms one of the Three Jewels (ti-ratana) and one of the Ten Recollections (anussati). The Three Jewels, also known as the Three Gems are the fundamental objects of refuge and devotion. The Three Jewels are discussed in the December 2023 Newsletter - Buddhist Community (parisā).

### 1. Buddha

The first jewel is the Buddha which is discussed in the April 2025 Newsletter. The Buddha, represents the ideal of enlightenment, the fully enlightened teacher and example for all of his disciples. Taking refuge in the Buddha is to acknowledge that liberation from suffering (dukkha), the realization of nibbāna, is possible because the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, and his disciples demonstrated that enlightenment can be realized.

### 2. Dhamma

The second jewel is the Dhamma, which refers to the teachings of the Buddha; and is discussed in this newsletter. The Dhamma is the teachings on how to realize nibbāna, and the principles of truth and reality. Taking refuge in the Dhamma is to accept and be committed to the path of practice taught by the Buddha which results in the realization of nibbāna.

### 3. Saṅgha

The third jewel is the Saṅgha, which consists of the community of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen who have achieved various stages of enlightenment; and will be discussed in the June 2025 Newsletter. The Saṅgha are spiritual guides and support for individuals on their paths to awakening. Taking refuge in the Saṅgha is a support for training the mind while following the path.

Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines by Nyanatiloka Thera

p. 347

ti-ratana: 'Three Jewels' or Three Gems, which by all Buddhists are revered as the most venerable things, are the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Holy Saṅgha, i.e.: the Enlightened One; the law of deliverance discovered, realised and proclaimed by him; and the Community of Holy Disciples and those who live in accordance with the Law. The contemplations of the three Jewels belong to the ten contemplations (anussati).

The Ten Recollections are contemplative and meditative practices that cultivate mindfulness, concentration, devotion, and insight. They are used to help purify the mind and motivate spiritual progress.

#### 1. Recollection of the Buddha (buddhānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the qualities of the Buddha, his wisdom, compassion, and enlightenment. The qualities of the Buddha are reflected in the Ten Epithets of the Buddha (dasa buddha nāma guṇa) discussed in the April 2025 Newsletter.

#### 2. Recollection of the Dhamma (dhammānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the truth and teachings of the Buddha, emphasizing their liberating nature; and on the Ten Qualities of the Dhamma (dasa dhamma guṇa) discussed in this newsletter.

#### 3. Recollection of the Saṅgha (saṅghānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the community of noble disciples (sāvakas) who uphold and practice the Dhamma; and on the Ten Qualities of the Saṅgha (dasa saṅgha guṇa) discussed in the May 2025 Newsletter.

#### 4. Recollection of Morality (sīlānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the benefits of ethical conduct. See the February 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī).

#### 5. Recollection of Generosity (cāgānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the benefits of engaging in acts of generosity and service, which cultivates a selfless mind. See the January 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī).

#### 6. Recollection of the Devas (devatānussati)

The practice is to contemplate and produce the qualities that are the causes for rebirth among celestial beings (devas). Accumulating sufficient wholesome kamma is the cause for rebirth in the deva realms, such kamma is created through the cultivation of such qualities as: generosity, service, virtue, pure speech, right livelihood, renunciation, mindfulness, concentration,

compassion, wisdom, gratitude and respect for the Dhamma. See the August 2023 Newsletter - kamma for a discussion on the deva realms, and the various types of kamma and their results.

7. Recollection of Death (maraṇānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the inevitability of death in order to develop a sense of urgency (saṃvega) in training the mind in accordance with the Dhamma. See the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā) for a discussion on the Charnel Ground Contemplations (paṭikkūla manasikāra); these meditations are used to highlight the impermanence of the body, the inevitability of death, the unattractiveness, fragility, and disintegration of the body; to develop the urgency to remove attachment to the body which is a requirement for the realization of nibbāna.

8. Recollection of the Body (kāyagatāsati)

The practice is to contemplate and be mindful of the body in every posture: sitting, walking, standing or lying down. The contemplation is to review the nature of the body as having the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa): impermanent (anicca), suffering (dukkha) and not-self nature (anattā). See the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā) for a discussion on Contemplations of the Body (kāyānupassanā).

9. Recollection of the Breath (ānāpānasati)

The practice is to contemplate and be aware of the breath as a technique to develop energy, mindfulness and concentration, which are the prerequisite conditions for the development of wisdom. The Three Characteristics of Existence may also be contemplated while being aware of the breathing sensations. See the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā) for a discussion on Mindfulness of Breathing (ānāpānasati).

10. Recollection of Peace (upasamānussati)

The practice is to contemplate the characteristics of nibbāna: unconditioned; beyond space, time, and kamma; free of suffering; the ultimate peace and happiness. Nibbāna is the extinguishing or blowing out of the fires of greed (lobha), hatred (dosa) and ignorance (avijjā). See the April 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion of nibbāna.

Recollection of the Dhamma is reported in the following sutta passages.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

The Book of the Elevens, II. Recollection, 11 (1) Mahānāma,  
p. 1565-1567

...  
(7) “Again, Mahānāma, you should recollect the Dhamma thus: ‘The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One, directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.’ When a noble disciple recollects the Dhamma, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; on that occasion his mind is simply straight, based on the Dhamma. A noble disciple whose mind is straight gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. When he is joyful, rapture arises. For one with a rapturous mind, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body feels pleasure. For one feeling pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. This is called a noble disciple who dwells in balance amid an unbalanced population, who dwells unafflicted amid an afflicted population. As one who has entered the stream of the Dhamma, he develops recollection of the Dhamma.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

The Book of the Elevens, II. Recollection, 12 (2) Mahānāma,  
p. 1568

... Mahānāma, you should develop this recollection of the [Dhamma] while walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. You should develop it while engaged in work and while living at home in a house full of children.

Dhamma has several meanings depending on context.

**I. The teachings of the Buddha.**

**II. Buddha’s insights into The Nature of Reality.**

**III. The Path to Liberation from suffering.**

## IV. Universal Laws that governs the cosmos.

### I. The Teachings of the Buddha

The Buddha taught the following for the understanding of suffering, its causes, and the path to liberation from suffering.

- The Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca)
  1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter,
  2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter,
  3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter, and
  4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (maggā) is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter.
- The Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa)
  1. impermanence (anicca),
  2. suffering (dukkha), and the
  3. absence of a permanent self (anattā).

These characteristics are discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).
- Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda)
  1. ignorance (avijjā) give rise to (paccayā),
  2. volitional formations (saṅkhārā), volitional formations give rise to (paccayā),
  3. consciousness (viññāṇa), consciousness give rise to (paccayā),
  4. mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa), mentality-materiality give rise to (paccayā),
  5. six sense bases (saḷāyatana), six sense bases give rise to (paccayā),
  6. contact (phassa), contact give rise to (paccayā),
  7. feeling (vedanā), feeling give rise to (paccayā),
  8. craving (taṇhā), craving give rise to (paccayā),
  9. clinging (upādāna), clinging give rise to (paccayā),
  10. becoming-existence (bhava), becoming-existence give rise to (paccayā),
  11. birth (jāti), birth give rise to (paccayā),
  12. suffering (dukkha):
    - aging (jarā) and death (maraṇa),
    - sorrow (soka),
    - lamentation (parideva),
    - pain (dukkha),
    - grief, displeasure (domanassa), and
    - despair (upāyāsa).

Dependent Origination is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

- The Ten Perfections (dasa pāramīs)
  1. Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter,
  2. Virtue (sīla pāramī) is discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter,
  3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter,
  4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī) is discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter,
  5. Energy (viriya pāramī) is discussed in the May 2024 Newsletter,
  6. Patience (khanti pāramī) is discussed in the June 2024 Newsletter,
  7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī) is discussed in the July 2024 Newsletter,
  8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī) is discussed in the August 2024 Newsletter,
  9. Loving-kindness (mettā pāramī) is discussed in the September 2024 Newsletter, and
  10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī) is discussed in the October 2024 Newsletter.

- Meditative Practices
  - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) is discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter.
  - Insight Meditation (vipassanā) is discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter.
  - Removal of Distracting Thoughts is discussed in the January 2025 Newsletter.

## II. The Nature of Reality

- Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa)
 

All conditioned phenomena, the conditioned reality, share three fundamental characteristics.

  1. Impermanence (anicca) is the nature of all things in the universe, in that all things are constantly changing and lacks permanence. No-thing remains the same from moment to moment.
  2. Suffering (dukkha) arises in the mind due to attaching, craving or identifying with anything, because all things are impermanent they cannot be held onto.
  3. Not-self (anattā) is the reality of all things due to their impermanence, potential for causing suffering, and all things cannot be completely controlled. A true self is permanent and can be completely controlled. There is no unchanging, independent self or soul (ātman); instead, beings are composed of ever-changing mental and physical processes, the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā).
- Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda)
 

This doctrine explains that all phenomena arise due to specific causes and conditions. The teaching describes the cycle of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth through twelve links, showing that nothing exists independently. The cycle is broken when the Noble Eightfold Path is mastered and sufficient wisdom is realized, thereby suffering is ended.
- Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā)
 

There is no permanent self. A person is a combination of five constantly changing aggregates.

  1. Form (rūpa) is the physical body and material aspects.
  2. Feeling (vedanā) are the sensations: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral.
  3. Perception (saññā) is the recognition and categorization of experiences.
  4. Mental formations (saṅkhāra) are volitional formations, conditioned phenomena and processes.
  5. Sense Consciousness (viññāṇa) is the awareness of the contents of experiences.

These aggregates are impermanent and depend on causes, clinging to them as "self" leads to suffering.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi  
 Note 376 The five aggregates are here called suffering because they are impermanent and not susceptible to the exercise of mastery.

- Nibbāna is the Ultimate Reality
 

Conditioned phenomena are impermanent and unsatisfactory; nibbāna is the unconditioned reality, permanent, free from suffering. Nibbāna is timeless, beyond birth and death, the cessation of craving and attachment, and the end of the cycle of rebirth (samsāra).

## III. The Path to Liberation

The Dhamma is the path to liberation from suffering. Understanding and practicing the principles of Dhamma, minds are purified of defilements, develop wisdom and compassion, and attain enlightenment.

The path to liberation is the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). The path consists of eight interconnected factors grouped into three categories: wisdom (paññā), ethical conduct (sīla), and concentration (samādhi).

### I. Wisdom

1. Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi) is the understanding of reality as it is, particularly the Four Noble Truths: suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of the causes of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of the causes of suffering.

2. Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa) is the cultivation of thoughts of renunciation, loving-kindness, and non-harming; instead of attachment, ill will, and cruelty.

## II. Ethical Conduct

3. Right Speech (sammā-vācā) is to speak truthfully; the avoidance of lying, harsh words, gossip, and divisive speech.
4. Right Action (sammā-kammanta) is to act ethically by abstaining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.
5. Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva) is to work in a way that does not cause harm to others; to avoid professions that kill, exploit, or deceive others.

## III. Concentration

6. Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma) is to make a continuous effort to prevent unwholesome mental states from arising and to cultivate wholesome states.
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati) is the development of present-moment awareness by practicing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna).
8. Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi) is the development of meditative absorption (jhāna).

### Supporting Practices for Liberation

- Generosity (dāna) is the practice that cultivates selflessness by giving and helping others.
- Moral Discipline (sīla) is the training in the Five Precepts: no killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, or intoxicants.
- Mental Development (bhāvanā) cultivates energy (vīrya), mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi) through the practices of tranquility meditation (samatha) and insight meditation (vipassanā).

The Buddha's path to liberation is a gradual process of training in ethical conduct, concentration, and developing wisdom.

## IV. Universal Laws

Dhamma is the universal laws that governs all phenomena. These laws encompasses the natural order of the universe, the principles of cause and effect (kamma), and the ethical principles that guide human behavior.

The Buddha taught several universal laws that explain the nature of existence, the functioning of reality, and the path to liberation. These laws are fundamental truths that apply to all beings, shaping their experiences and determining their progress toward enlightenment.

- The Law of Impermanence (anicca)

Everything in existence is in a constant state of change. No-thing is permanent, and all conditioned things arise, exist for a time, and eventually pass away. Recognizing impermanence allow the mind to let go of conditioned phenomena, and accept the transient nature of life.

- The Law of Suffering (dukkha)

All conditioned existence is marked by suffering or unsatisfactoriness due to impermanence, craving, and attachment. The Buddha identified different types of suffering.

- Ordinary suffering: physical pain, sickness, aging, and death.
- Suffering due to change: losing what we love and encountering what we dislike.
- Suffering due to conditioned existence: the unsatisfactory nature of all worldly experiences.

See February 2023 Newsletter - Noble Truth of Suffering for a detailed discussion.

Understanding dukkha motivates individuals to seek liberation from suffering.

- The Law of Not-Self (anattā)

There is no permanent, independent self or soul. What we call a "self" is merely a collection of five aggregates (khandhas).

Since these aggregates are impermanent and ever-changing, clinging to them as "self" leads to suffering. Understanding anattā will dethrone the ego's influence over the mind and craving for conditioned reality.

- The Law of Cause and Effect (kamma)



The principle of kamma states that every intentional action; whether through thought, speech, or deed; has consequences.

- Wholesome actions (kusala) lead to happiness and good rebirths.
- Unwholesome actions (akusala) lead to suffering and unpleasant rebirths.

Kamma is not fate but a natural law of moral causation that shapes future experiences. By cultivating wholesome kamma, the mind progresses toward liberation. Kamma is discussed in the August 2023 Newsletter.

- The Law of Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda)

This doctrine explains how suffering arises and how it can be eliminated. The twelve links of dependent origination show that everything arises due to causes and conditions. Dependent Origination is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

- The Law of Nibbāna

Nibbāna is the ultimate reality beyond conditioned reality, birth, suffering, death, and rebirth. The realization of nibbāna is attained through the cessation of ignorance and craving for any aspect of conditioned reality. Nibbāna is unconditioned, beyond time and space, and free from suffering. The May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering provides a detailed discussion of nibbāna.

The Buddha's universal laws describe the nature of conditioned reality, unconditioned reality, and the path to liberation. By understanding and applying these truths, the mind transcends suffering and realizes nibbāna.

Buddhadhamma by Bhikkhu P. A. Payutto

Introduction

The two main attributes of Buddha-Dhamma may be summarized as follows:

1. It reveals 'middle' (i.e. 'objective') principles of truth, and is thus referred to as the middle truth (majjhena-dhamma) or the middle teaching (majjhena-dhammadesanā). It reflects the truth in strict line with cause and effect and according to laws of nature. It has been revealed solely for the benefit of practical application in real life. It does not promote an attempt to realize the truth by creating various theories and dogmas based on philosophical conjecture and inference, which are consequently adhered to, debated and defended.
2. It lays down a system of practice referred to as the 'middle way' (majjhimā-paṭipadā), which acts as a guideline for those undergoing spiritual training. These practitioners gain a clear insight into their lives, steer away from credulity, and aim for those fruits of practice accessible in this lifetime, namely: happiness, purity, enlightenment, peace, and liberation. In practical application the Middle Way is connected to other factors, such as one's life as a renunciant or life as a householder.

The following are the Five Dhamma Supports (dhammūpanissaya).

1. Guidance of a spiritual teacher, associating with a spiritual teacher (garu saṁvāsa).
2. Intent on learning and reciting the Dhamma (uddesa).
3. Intent on inquiring into the meaning of doctrines learnt (uddiṭṭha paripucchana).
4. Listening to the Dhamma at proper times (kālena dhamma savana).
5. Inquiry into what are and are not the causes (tḥānāttḥāna vinicchaya) of experiences.

Understanding the Dhamma requires the study of its principals, reflection, and practice. The Dhamma is not merely a set of doctrines to be believed, but a path to be experienced and realized through the mind's own efforts.

## 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 planning 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

- Group sitting meditation practice for **one hour** is held Monday through Friday at 6:30AM and everyday at 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.
- Group sitting meditation practice for **two hours** is held every Saturday and Sunday at 6:30AM.
- 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.